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Agenda item 136 of the preliminary list*
Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019

Internal oversight: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019

Report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Summary

The present report reflects the comments, advice and recommendations of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services for the biennium 2018-2019.

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I. Introduction

1. The Independent Audit Advisory Committee has undertaken a review of the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the biennium 2018-2019 in accordance with paragraph 2 (c) and (d) of its terms of reference (see General Assembly resolution 61/275, annex). The Committee's responsibility in this respect is to review the budget proposal of OIOS, taking into account its workplan, and to make recommendations to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The present report contains the Committee's comments, advice and recommendations relating to the proposed programme budget for OIOS for the biennium 2018-2019, for consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Assembly.

2. The Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Department of Management provided the Committee with the section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 on internal oversight (A/72/6 (Sect. 30)), as well as relevant supplementary information. OIOS provided supplementary information relating to its budget proposal, which the Committee took into consideration. At its thirty-eighth session, held from 19 to 21 April 2017, the Committee allocated a significant proportion of its agenda to discussions with OIOS and with the Controller on the budget for OIOS.

3. The Committee would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Programme Planning and Budget Division in expediting the preparation of the internal oversight section of the budget for review by the Committee. The Committee also appreciates the cooperation on the part of OIOS in providing information for the preparation of the present report.

II. Review of the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services for the biennium 2018-2019

4. The projected resources for OIOS for the biennium 2018-2019 from the regular budget, combined with other assessed and extrabudgetary funds, totalled $118,396,900, compared with $118,152,900 for the biennium 2016-2017, which is a slight increase of 0.2 per cent (see table 1, below).

Table 1
Financial resources by programme
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2013-2013	2014-2015	2016-2017	2018-2019	Variance	
					2018-2019 compared with 2016-2017 appropriation	
Regular Budget	*Expenditure*	*Expenditure*	*Appropriation*	*Proposed budget (after recosting)*	*Amount*	*Percentage*
A. Executive direction and management	2 783.1	3 157.7	2 988.6	2 985.2	(3.4)	(0.1)
B. Programme of work	33 117.7	34 055.0	34 647.7	35 374.1	726.4	2.1
Subprogramme 1. Internal audit	15 290.7	15 711.4	16 793.1	16 868.3	75.2	0.4
Subprogramme 2. Inspection and evaluation	7 733.4	8 151.5	7 654.9	7 845.6	190.7	2.5
Subprogramme 3. Investigations	10 093.6	10 192.1	10 199.7	10 660.2	460.5	4.5

Regular Budget	*2013-2013* *Expenditure*	*2014-2015* *Expenditure*	*2016-2017* *Appropriation*	*2018-2019* *Proposed budget (after recosting)*	*Variance* *2018-2019 compared with 2016-2017 appropriation* *Amount*	*Percentage*
C. Programme support costs	2 600.8	2 567.0	2 512.1	2 757.0	244.9	9.7
Subtotal	**38 501.6**	**39 779.7**	**40 148.4**	**41 116.3**	**967.9**	**2.4**
Other assessed						
B. Programme of work	50 860.2	54 098.5	58 747.5	57 151.3	(1 596.2)	(2.7)
Subprogramme 1. Internal audit	33 770.0	36 161.0	37 172.9	35 155.4	(2 017.5)	(5.4)
Subprogramme 2. Inspection and evaluation	1 808.5	1 968.4	2 353.0	3 044.1	691.1	29.4
Subprogramme 3. Investigations	15 281.7	15 969.1	19 221.6	18 951.8	(269.8)	(1.4)
C. Programme support costs	1 537.7	1 727.2	1 728.5	2 381.7	653.2	37.8
Subtotal	**52 397.9**	**55 825.7**	**60 476.0**	**59 533.0**	**(943.0)**	**(1.6)**
Extrabudgetary						
A. Executive direction and management		6.3				
B. Programme of work	16 262.1	17 189.1	17 528.5	17 747.6	219.1	1.2
Subprogramme 1. Internal audit	15 939.8	15 851.9	17 484.4	17 747.6	263.2	1.5
Subprogramme 2. Inspection and evaluation						
Subprogramme 3. Investigations	322.3	1 337.2	44.1		(44.1)	(100.0)
C. Programme support costs						
Subtotal	**16 262.1**	**17 195.4**	**17 528.5**	**17 747.6**	**219.1**	**1.2**
Total	**107 161.6**	**112 800.8**	**118 152.9**	**118 396.9**	**244.0**	**0.2**

Note: Budget figures (after recosting) were based on the budget fascicle contained in A/72/6 (Sect. 30) and the relevant supplementary information.

5. The Committee was informed that, while the total budget had increased overall, there was a reduction of 1.6 per cent in other assessed resources. The Committee was also informed that the 1.2 per cent increase in extrabudgetary funding was due to an anticipated increase in funding for the Internal Audit Division, and not for the Investigation Division which had no projected extrabudgetary funding for the biennium 2018-2019.

6. As shown in table 1, the proposed programme budget for OIOS for the biennium 2018-2019 (regular budget) is estimated at $41,116,300 (after recosting), which is an increase of $967,900, or 2.4 per cent, compared with the 2016-2017 appropriation. While table 1 shows costs after recosting, the Committee's report generally uses values before recosting, (which exclude estimated increases owing to inflation and currency fluctuations), in order to facilitate comparisons between the budgets for the bienniums 2016-2017 and 2018-2019.

7. Table 2 presents the regular budget proposal for OIOS for the biennium 2018-2019 compared with the appropriation for the biennium 2016-2017. The proposed programme budget for OIOS for the biennium 2018-2019 (regular budget) is estimated at $39,926,900 (before recosting), which is a decrease of $221,500, or 0.6 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2016-2017.

Table 2
Financial resources by programme
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2013-2013	2014-2015	2016-2017	2018-2019	Variance	
					2018-2019 compared with 2016-2017 appropriation	
	Expenditure	Expenditure	Appropriation	Proposed budget (before recosting)	Amount	Percentage
A. Executive direction and management	2 783.1	3 157.7	2 988.6	2 902.8	(85.8)	(2.9)
B. Programme of work	33 117.7	34 055.0	34 647.7	34 340.2	(307.5)	(0.9)
Subprogramme 1. Internal audit	15 290.7	15 711.4	16 793.1	16 393.6	(399.5)	(2.4)
Subprogramme 2. Inspection and evaluation	7 733.4	8 151.5	7 654.9	7 603.1	(51.8)	(0.7)
Subprogramme 3. Investigations	10 093.6	10 192.1	10 199.7	10 343.5	143.8	1.4
C. Programme support costs	2 600.8	2 567.0	2 512.1	2 683.9	171.8	6.8
Total	**38 501.6**	**39 779.7**	**40 148.4**	**39 926.9**	**(221.5)**	**(0.6)**

Note: Budget figures (before recosting) were based on the budget fascicle contained in A/72/6 (Sect. 30), and the relevant supplementary information.

8. The 0.6 per cent decrease in the budget is primarily a result of a reduction in resource requirements for the Internal Audit and Inspection and Evaluation Divisions and for Executive Direction and Management. The reduction in the resource requirements was attributable mainly to, inter alia, the abolishment of two posts, from 116 posts approved in the biennium 2016-2017 to 114 posts proposed for the biennium 2018-2019, owing to efficiency gains as a result of Umoja.

9. The Committee also noted that, as at 31 March 2017, there continued to be a high vacancy rate in OIOS, especially in the Investigation Division, which has a vacancy rate of 22.2 per cent, a slight decrease from the 25.3 per cent that the Committee noted in its previous report (A/70/86). **Although the Committee was informed of the renewed effort that OIOS was putting into identifying viable alternative recruitment and retention strategies for qualified staff, the Committee is not yet in a position to assess the impact of this development. The Committee will continue to monitor this effort in future reports and will highlight any progress.**

A. Executive direction and management

10. As noted in table 2, the resource requirements for Executive Direction and Management are expected to decrease by 2.9 per cent. The Committee was informed that the reduction was mainly the result of the removal of the non-recurrent expenditures attributed to contractual services for the training on the use of the new recommendation tracking software and the redeployment of resources to programme support.

B. Programme of work

Subprogramme 1
Internal audit

11. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 1, Internal Audit, for the biennium 2018-2019, is $16,393,600 (before recosting). The amount represents a

decrease of $399,500, or 2.4 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $16,793,100 for the biennium 2016-2017. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the decrease was attributable mainly to efficiency gains as a result of Umoja, which led to the abolishment of two General Service posts. Accordingly, the Committee notes that the post requirements for internal audit have been reduced from 46 to 44 posts.

Risk-based workplanning process

12. The Committee held extensive discussions with OIOS on their risk-based audit workplanning process to ascertain how the Internal Audit Division takes organizational risk into account in determining the level of resources required to deliver the programme of work. The Committee continues to believe that using risk assessments to prioritize and allocate audit resources is a best practice, which the Committee supported in its previous reports on the budget for OIOS. On that note, OIOS informed the Committee that it continues to use a three year rolling workplan which was developed using the same risk-based approach that was used for the 2013 and 2014 workplanning. According to OIOS, the process involved validating and updating the previous years' audit universe; updating the risk universe for all client entities covering programmes, functions, structures, processes, initiatives and information technology systems; and the consideration of management requests for audits.

13. The Office of Internal Oversight Services further informed the Committee that a risk-ranked audit universe of auditable activities had been developed, taking into account the impact and likelihood of risks; the controls that exist to mitigate risks; the previous oversight activities; the results of ongoing interactions and consultations within OIOS with the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit; and other priorities.

14. Responding to the Committee's prior concern that there was no link between the Internal Audit Division's risk assessment and the Organization's risk register, OIOS informed the Committee that the Internal Audit Division had improved the process and had provided for: (a) a clearer link between the Internal Audit Division risk registers per client and Secretariat-wide enterprise risk-management risk register; (b) an increased focus on, and attention paid to, effectiveness and efficiency; and (c) opportunities to work jointly with other OIOS divisions.

15. Recalling paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 69/249, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take measures to address general deficiencies in control and fraud prevention, the Committee enquired as to how the current workplan of OIOS had taken into account the recent findings of the Board of Auditors, especially with regard to fraud and internal control. In response, OIOS informed the Committee that, in its current workplan, it had placed increased focus on fraud and mismanagement.

Capacity gap assessment

16. The Office of Internal Oversight Services informed the Committee that, in order to identify the resource gaps, the Internal Audit Division had compared the available audit resources by funding type against the number of planned assignments per year based on the standard audit criteria of covering higher level residual risk areas over a three-year period. According to OIOS, the capacity-gap analysis identified that, if it had additional resources, the Internal Audit Division could increase its annual coverage of higher-risk activities for clients funded with extrabudgetary resources. The Committee was further informed that no additional resources were being requested in the light of the current financial situation.

17. **The Office of Internal Oversight Services informed the Committee that, from previous experience, OIOS had the ability to obtain sufficient resources to cover higher-risk operations and emerging activities throughout the budget period. The Committee nevertheless calls on OIOS to continue to refine its risk assessment process to ensure that the available resources only go to the highest-risk operations, which can be achieved through continued prioritization of the workplan. The Committee therefore endorses the resource requirements for the Internal Audit Division as presented.**

Subprogramme 2
Inspection and evaluation

18. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 2, Inspection and evaluation, amounts to $7,603,100 (before recosting), representing a net decrease of $51,800, or 0.7 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $7,654,900 for the biennium 2016-2017. The Committee was informed that the reduction was mainly a result of efficiency gains that the Office plans to bring about in 2018-2019.

Risk assessment and capacity gap analysis

19. The Committee was informed that the Inspection and Evaluation Division continued to refine and improve its risk-assessment approach. In addition to utilizing a combination of risk information from the Internal Audit Division, an assessment of entities' monitoring and evaluation capacity and the budget size of the entities, OIOS informed the Committee that an enhanced risk approach that considered the likelihood and the consequences of failure risk factors was used. According to OIOS, the assessment also included an analysis of the priorities set by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for the identification of thematic topics. The Office of Internal Oversight Services indicated that the Inspection and Evaluation Division was focusing on the areas with the highest aggregate risk in terms of governance, strategy and programme and project management.

20. In the light of the Committee's prior recommendation, which called for a clearer link between the Organization's enterprise risk management and OIOS risk assessment, OIOS informed the Committee that the Inspection and Evaluation Division considered the Secretariat enterprise risk management risk register, as well as the 2017 OIOS list of high-risk issues during the risk assessment process. OIOS further noted that, to ensure consistency with enterprise risk management and OIOS critical risk areas, the Inspection and Evaluation Division planned to consider cross-cutting areas under its entity-level program evaluations or as possible topics for thematic evaluations.

21. In paragraph 25 of its previous report (A/70/86), the Committee indicates that one of the biggest aspects of the capacity gap was the inability of OIOS to reduce the evaluation cycle from a periodicity of 11-13 years to a frequency of every 8 years, in line with the requirements of the General Assembly. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that the Committee on Programme Coordination and the General Assembly had endorsed the OIOS proposal to reduce the regular budget evaluation cycle to eight years. This reduction means that more resources would be needed to evaluate the various entities.

22. Accordingly, OIOS informed the Committee that a fully resourced Division that meets its work requirements would involve additional resources for four staff, namely, a team leader (P-4), as well as two Evaluation Officers (P-3) and one Associate Evaluation Officer (P-2). However, cognizant of the zero-budget growth financial situation, OIOS indicated to the Committee that it had proposed to

reclassify one P-3 post as a P-4 post in order to have an experienced evaluation team leader lead one of the programme or thematic evaluations. However, the proposal was not endorsed by the Controller.

23. **The Committee noted that many of the entities to be evaluated during the biennium 2018-2019 included those that were predominantly funded from extrabudgetary resources, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The Committee also noted that, as shown in table 1, no extrabudgetary resources have been budgeted for evaluation in the coming biennium; in fact, all of the OIOS extrabudgetary resources were for internal audit. In the light of this apparent anomaly, the Committee wishes to reiterate its previous recommendations that OIOS revisit its funding arrangements, especially in connection with extrabudgetary activities. This would be one of the ways to address the capacity gap issues that the Inspection and Evaluation Division is facing.**

24. The Committee also followed up with OIOS on its plan to undertake performance audits as another means of addressing the capacity gaps in the Inspection and Evaluation Division as stated in the Committee's previous report (A/70/86, para. 25). In response, the Committee was informed that the Internal Audit Division was developing guidance for audit teams to ensure that they bring in more efficiency and economy issues (performance) into OIOS audits. Furthermore, OIOS informed the Committee that the Inspection and Evaluation Division and the Internal Audit Division were committed to the continued development of joint efforts following the success of the review and evaluation of the strategic deployment stock.

25. **While noting the good intentions in addressing the limited resources through creative means, including performance audits, the Committee is concerned that no tangible progress has been achieved in this area and calls on OIOS to expedite the process to ensure that performance audits become an integral part of OIOS workplans.**

26. **The Committee endorses the workplan and subsequent budget of the Inspection and Evaluation Division for the biennium 2018-2019, which calls for the maintenance of the same level of resources as for the biennium 2016-2017, with a view to ensuring that the alternative strategies raised in the foregoing paragraphs will be carefully considered and adopted. The Committee also believes that without implementing those proposed plans of action, it is unlikely that the Inspection and Evaluation Division will be able to address all of the high risk areas in its portfolio, especially in the current financial environment.**

Subprogramme 3
Investigations

27. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 3, Investigations, for the biennium 2018-2019 amounts to $10,343,500 (before recosting), representing a net increase of $143,800, or 1.4 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $10,199,700 for the biennium 2016-2017. The net increase in the overall resource requirement for the regular budget is attributable mainly to the biennial provision for the two new posts that were established in the biennium 2016-2017.

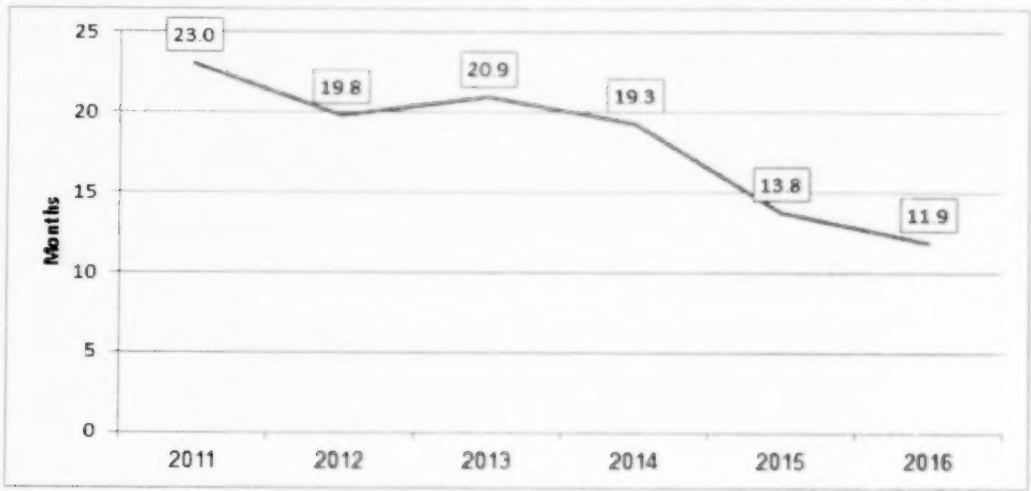
Workplan process

28. As noted in its report on the support account budget (A/71/800), the Committee continues to be cognizant of the challenges that have plagued the Division, especially with regard to its operations, internal working relationships and effectiveness. The Committee also noted that, at 18 per cent (as at 31 March 2017), the vacancy rate in the regular budget portion of the Investigations Division (although not as high as the peacekeeping support account budget) was still much higher than that of any other area of OIOS.

29. During the review process, the Committee was again informed that the Investigations Division was addressing these persistent problems, especially the recruitment and retention of staff in the Division. For instance, the Committee was informed that the average time to complete an investigation continued to decrease, from a high of 23 months in 2011 to the current level of less than 12 months (see figure I).

Figure I

OIOS average time taken to complete an investigation as at 31 December 2016



30. The Committee was also informed that in 2018-2019, the Investigations Division would place its emphasis on several initiatives designed to improve its operation, including:

(a) Maintaining the downward trajectory in the average length of time it takes to complete a case. The management of ageing cases should be such that, on the first day of the year, there would be no open cases dating from the year prior to the previous one. This means that, on 1 January 2017, there should be no open 2015 cases, and certainly no 2014 cases;

(b) Completing all sexual exploitation and abuse cases within the target 6-month time limit and all other cases within the target 12-month time limit;

(c) Continuously improving the quality of the Investigations Division reports, of all types;

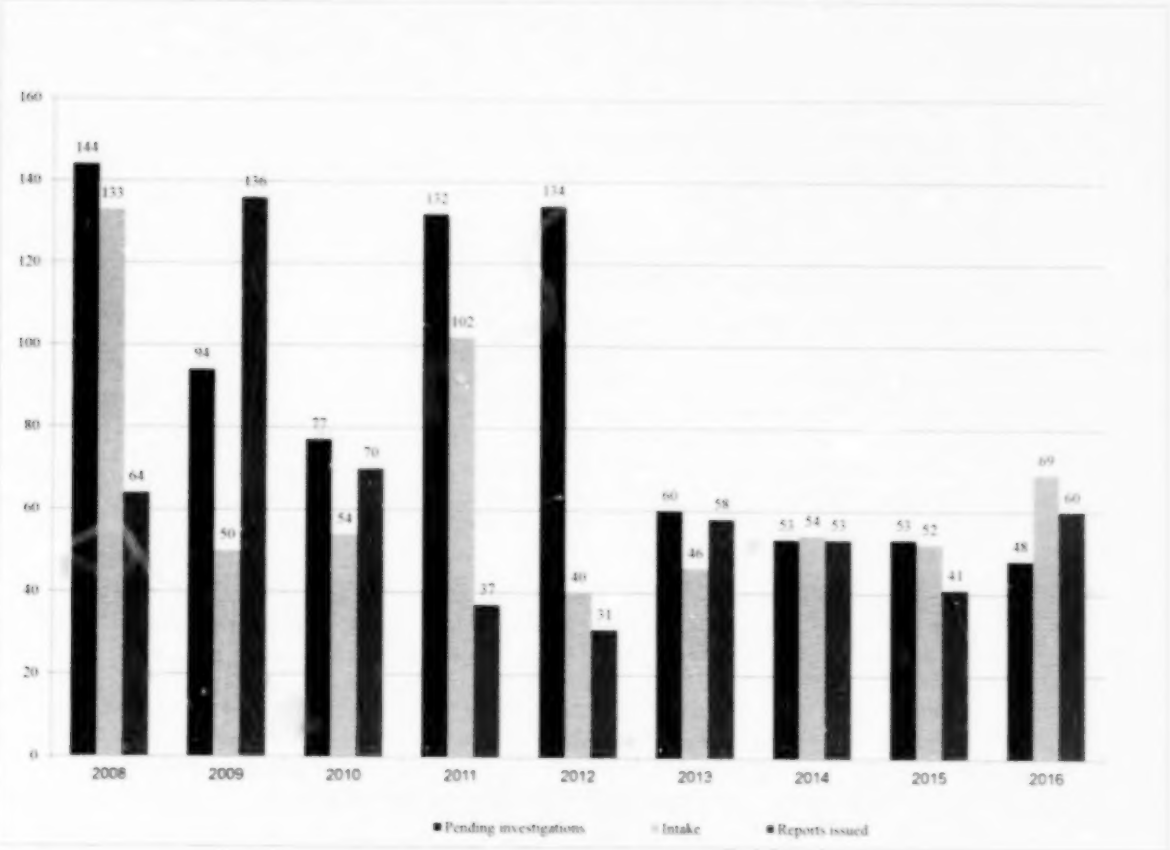
(d) Mainstreaming the digital forensics thinking into the investigation process.

31. **With the exception of the vacancy issues, the Committee welcomes the progress made so far. The Committee continues to believe that the current initiatives, if successfully implemented, will form the basis of a more effective and efficient Investigations Division. The Committee strongly encourages OIOS to continue to closely manage the implementation of the initiatives. The Committee continues to believe that augmented effort is needed to reduce the average length of time for completing an investigation, from 11.9 months, reported as at 31 December 2016, to the target of 6 months. The Committee will continue to review this matter and provide a further update in its annual report.**

Risk assessment and the capacity gap analysis

32. As part of its basis for the review of resource allocation of OIOS, the Committee continues to receive an updated trend analysis showing case load from 2008 to 2016 (see figure II).

Figure II
Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services — regular budget caseload



Capacity gap

33. The Office of Internal Oversight Services informed the Committee that training was one of its core priorities for the biennium 2018-2019. The Office further informed the Committee that the requirement for training was in accordance with paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 59/287, in which the Assembly

requested the Secretary-General to increase basic investigation training for the handling of minor forms of misconduct, to develop written procedures for the proper conduct of investigations and to promote the concept of an independent investigation function within the United Nations. According to OIOS, the Office was planning to convert one P-4 post to a post of training officer in the Director's office to provide investigative training to units outside of OIOS.

34. **The Committee notes the need to fulfil the mandate of the General Assembly regarding training. In the light of the above, the Committee continues to believe that decisions about augmenting the capacity of the Investigations Division to provide investigation training should not be made in isolation, but rather in the context of the broader decisions about the overall organization, roles and responsibilities for investigations across the Secretariat.**

Risk assessment

35. With respect to risk assessment, the Committee has recommended on several occasions that OIOS include, in the context of its future budget submissions for the Investigations Division, a risk-based workplan for the Committee to review. In its report dated 27 May 2013 (A/68/86), the Committee stated that a proactive investigation unit had been established and that the forensic capacity, as well as the capacity to handle procurement-related fraud, had been improved. In paragraph 36 of previous report (A/70/86), the Committee was informed that the single forensic unit that had been set up in New York was not ideal, and that, instead, three different posts (at the P-4 level) would be established in New York, Vienna and Nairobi reporting to the Deputy Directors whose investigations they primarily support. Furthermore, on procurement fraud, the Committee was informed that the Proactive Risk Unit would enable the Investigations Division to perform more proactive procurement investigations, developed from a superior ability to conduct link-analysis between cases, entities and individuals.

36. The Committee followed up with OIOS on the status of the above initiatives and was informed that the three Digital Forensic Investigators based in New York, Vienna and Nairobi represented a key investigative tool and were invaluable resources, far outweighing the resourcing of any comparable United Nations investigations unit. Nevertheless, the Committee was informed that the current use, organization, equipping and reporting lines of these forensic units were far from satisfactory and needed to be reviewed and improved, with their use mainstreamed, especially in the light of the fact that most of the evidence was now found in computer systems.

37. **In the light of the ongoing implementation of Umoja and the wealth of valuable data it is expected to provide, and without prejudice to the expected service delivery model for the Secretariat, the Committee continues to believe that the synergies that could be created by incorporating the case management system of OIOS in the proactive risk-management process is invaluable. In the context of the new digitalized environment that the United Nations is operating under, the Committee calls on OIOS to embrace the new ways of doing business by developing its forensic and proactive risk units as a matter of priority.**

38. The above initiatives notwithstanding, the Committee was informed that the Investigations Division was not requesting additional resources for the biennium 2018-2019, in the light of the current financial situation, but rather that the number of posts would remain at 33 for the biennium 2018-2019. This position has become all the more apparent since, as shown in figure II, the regular budget caseload, which has been the basis for the Division's resource allocation, has remained constant since the biennium 2012-2014.

39. **In the light of the above, taking into account that the proposed programme budget for investigations for 2018-2019 continues to be based on trend analysis of the intake rather than a combination that would include a risk-based workplan, as the Committee has long advocated, and also taking into account the high vacancy rate, and without prejudice to the ongoing process to strengthen the investigation function in the Secretariat, the Committee continues not to be in a position to provide an overall assurance as to the adequacy of the proposed level of the investigation resources.**

C. Programme support

40. The proposed budget for programme support for the biennium 2018-2019 amounts to $2,683,900 (before recosting). That amount represents a net increase of $171,800, or 6.8 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $2,512,100 for the biennium 2016-2017. The increase in the budget is attributable mainly to the redeployment of provisions for general temporary assistance from Executive Direction and Management and the programme of work.

III. Conclusion

41. The members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee respectfully submit the present report containing the Committee's comments and recommendations, for the consideration of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Maria Gracia M. Pulido **Tan**
Chair, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) J. Christopher **Mihm**
Vice-Chair, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Patricia X. **Arriagada** Villouta
Member, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Natalia A. **Bocharova**
Member, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Richard Quartei **Quartey**
Member, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

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Seventy-second session
Item 85 of the preliminary list*
The rule of law at the national and international levels

Review of the regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/148, provides a review of the regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, taking into account recent developments in the area of the registration and publication of treaties.

* A/72/50.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/148, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further elaborate on a review of the regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, taking into account recent developments. It expands on the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities (see A/71/169, para. 25).

2. The treaty-making practice in the international community and the practice relating to the implementation of Article 102 have changed considerably since the adoption of the regulations, in 1946. Technological developments have also profoundly transformed the registration and publication of treaties, rendering some provisions of the regulations out of date. In the present report, the Secretary-General therefore provides a review of the regulations to ensure that their text reflects current practice, and gives useful guidance to Member States on the fulfilment of their obligations under Article 102. The Secretary-General also discusses possible means of increasing the efficiency of the registration and publication process and enhancing the role played by the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs in supporting Member States in this area.

II. Historical background

3. The registration and publication of treaties have their origin in Article 18 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which provided for the registration with and publication by the Secretariat of any treaty or international engagement entered into by the Members of the League. This obligation was introduced in order to promote public awareness of and interest in treaty-making, remove causes of distrust and conflict and contribute to the formation of a clear and indisputable system of international law. While no formal regulations were ever adopted, the Council of the League approved, in 1920, a memorandum by the Secretary-General providing guidelines for registration and publication.[1]

4. The registration and publication of treaties are provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 102 provides that every treaty and international agreement entered into by any Member after the entry into force of the Charter shall as soon as possible be registered with the Secretariat and published by it. It further provides that no party to any such treaty or agreement which has not been registered may invoke that treaty or agreement before any organ of the United Nations.

5. At its first session, the General Assembly instructed the Secretary-General to submit detailed proposals for additional rules for the implementation of Article 102. Following the submission of the relevant report of the Secretary-General, the Assembly, by its resolution 97 (I), adopted the regulations to give effect to Article 102.

6. Since their adoption, the regulations have been amended on three occasions with a view to reflecting changes in treaty-making practice and increasing the efficiency of the registration and publication process.

7. At its fourth session, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 364 B (IV), in which it amended article 4 of the regulations to provide for the registration ex officio of multilateral treaties or agreements where the United Nations was the depositary.

[1] See League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1.

8. At its fifth session, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 482 (V), in which it amended articles 7 and 8 of the regulations, respectively removing the requirement that certificates of registration be issued to all parties to the registered treaty (requiring instead that such a certificate be issued to the registering party and to any other party only upon request) and reducing the number of languages in which the register is kept to two (English and French). To assist in the timely publication of the United Nations *Treaty Series*, the Assembly also invited States to provide translations in English or French or both of treaties submitted for registration.

9. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 33/141 A, in which, noting that the number of international agreements had considerably increased in the previous decade and that the delays in registration and publication had increased to the point where the implementation of Article 102 might be seriously jeopardized, it amended article 12 of the regulations to give the Secretariat the option not to publish in extenso certain categories of bilateral treaties (limited publication). The Assembly maintained a dedicated item on the registration and publication of treaties on the agendas of its following three sessions, at which the Secretary-General submitted reports (A/34/466, A/35/423 and A/36/570), as requested by the Assembly, on the implementation of resolution 33/141 and the situation of the *Treaty Series*.

10. In its resolution 39/90, adopted under the agenda item "Review of the multilateral treaty-making process", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to examine the regulations with a view to their possible updating. That item, however, was not included in the agenda of the following session.

11. In the 1990s, the Secretariat developed a comprehensive treaty database containing all depositary and registration information and established, for the first time, a system for the electronic dissemination of that information, including the *Treaty Series*. In its resolution 51/158, adopted in the context of the United Nations Decade of International Law, the General Assembly welcomed those initiatives. In resolutions adopted later under the same item,[2] the Assembly reiterated its call for States to provide translations of treaties submitted for registration and encouraged them to provide, where available, copies of the texts of such treaties in electronic format. In addition, the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to apply to multilateral treaties the provisions of article 12, paragraph 2, of the regulations, as amended, on limited publication.

III. Review of the regulations

12. As requested by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General elaborates in the paragraphs below on his review of the regulations.

A. Reaffirming the importance of the registration and publication of treaties

13. Since 1945, more than 70,000 treaties have been registered with the Secretariat. The rate of registration has increased over time, with an average of more than 1,400 treaties registered annually over the past 10 years, representing a 10 per cent increase compared with the previous decade.

[2] Resolutions 52/153, 53/100 and 54/28.

14. The obligation to register treaties has not, however, met with universal compliance. While it is not possible to ascertain the total number of existing treaties since 1945, it is clear that a significant number of treaties in force have not been registered.

15. Furthermore, treaty registration appears to be geographically imbalanced. An analysis of treaties submitted for registration in the past decade shows significant divergences in the number submitted by States from different regional groups. This imbalance may be due to several factors, including limited awareness of the obligation to register or a lack of resources for the submission of treaties for registration.

16. The Treaty Section has undertaken several activities aimed at supporting Member States in meeting their obligation under Article 102, including the organization of workshops at United Nations Headquarters and at the regional level, and the dissemination of legal publications, such as the *Treaty Handbook*. These have proved to be effective tools for promoting a wider understanding of the registration and publication process.

17. In the light of the considerations set out above, the General Assembly may wish to reaffirm the importance of the registration and publication of treaties and emphasize the obligation of Member States under Article 102. The Assembly may also wish to consider additional measures that could be undertaken to address the current shortcomings in treaty registration, through capacity-building, publications or technical assistance.

B. Reviewing the substantive conditions for registration (article 1)

18. Article 1, paragraph 1, of the regulations provides that every treaty or international agreement, whatever its form and descriptive name, entered into by one or more Members of the United Nations shall be registered with the Secretariat.

19. At the first session of the General Assembly, the Sixth Committee considered defining in greater detail the categories of treaties and international agreements subject to registration but ultimately resolved to retain the general terms of Article 102, with the addition of the words "whatever its form and descriptive name".

20. In considering whether a submitted agreement should be registered, the Secretariat bases its position, in addition to the provisions of Article 102 of the Charter and article 1 of the regulations, on the accepted definition of the term "treaty" under international law as reflected in article 2, paragraph 1 (a), of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, while also taking into account the views expressed by the Sixth Committee.

21. Through the consistent application of the regulations as outlined above, a significant body of practice has emerged among States and within the Secretariat, leading to a stable and common understanding of the instruments considered registrable in accordance with Article 102.

22. The comprehensive body of registered treaties, made available both in the *Treaty Series* and online, provides a unique resource for appraising the evolving treaty-making practice in the international community. It shows, for example, different approaches among Member States regarding the treaty-making capacity of international organizations or the legal status of certain categories of agreements (such as memorandums of understanding or inter-institutional arrangements).

23. While a modification of the definition of a treaty or international agreement set out in article 1, paragraph 1, of the regulations is not needed, the General

Assembly may wish to consider whether the present review could provide an opportunity for an exchange of views among States regarding their treaty-making practice as reflected in the registration of treaties. The Assembly may also wish to consider how to take advantage of the registration information made available by the Treaty Section for the purposes of conducting analytical studies of that treaty-making practice.

C. Recognizing the role of depositaries other than the United Nations (article 1, paragraph 3, and article 4)

24. Article 1, paragraph 3, of the regulations provides that registration may be effected by any party to a treaty. Article 4, paragraph 1, provides that, where the United Nations is a party to a treaty, has been authorized by a treaty to effect registration or is the depositary of a multilateral treaty, the treaty must be registered ex officio by the United Nations.

25. No provision in the regulations refers to the registration of multilateral treaties by other depositaries. This matter was discussed by the Sixth Committee at the second and third sessions of the General Assembly. The Secretariat had suggested that it would be desirable for multilateral treaties to be submitted for registration by the Government having custody of the original document, which would also be responsible for registering subsequent actions. The Secretariat noted that that would prevent duplication of efforts on the part of States parties to the treaty. The Committee concurred with that proposal and took note of the desirability of following such a procedure.[3] However, the regulations were not revised accordingly.

26. In accordance with the views expressed in the Sixth Committee, the established practice is that a multilateral treaty and any subsequent actions effected in relation to it should be registered by the depositary.[4] This practice extends to multilateral treaties deposited with an intergovernmental organization or its chief administrative officer. It follows that, when a multilateral treaty with a designated depositary is submitted for registration by one of its parties, the Secretariat will decline registration and request that the treaty be submitted by the depositary.

27. This practice is reflected in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Its article 77, paragraph 1 (g), provides for the registration of a treaty with the Secretariat of the United Nations as a depositary function. Article 80, paragraph 2, provides that the designation of a depositary shall constitute authorization for it to effect registration.

28. In order to reflect this practice and the current law of treaties, the General Assembly may wish to consider amending article 4 of the regulations so as to provide for the registration of multilateral treaties by the depositary.

D. Clarifying and simplifying the procedural requirements for registration (article 5)

29. Article 5 of the regulations is aimed at defining the procedural requirements for the submission of treaties for registration. It provides that the entity registering a treaty shall certify that the text is a true and complete copy thereof and includes all reservations made by the parties thereto. It also states that the certified copy shall

[3] See A/457; *Official Records of the Third Session of the General Assembly, Part I, Plenary Meetings of the General Assembly*, A/698.

[4] *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, Supplement No. 5, vol. V, Articles 92-111 of the Charter* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.V.7), art. 102.

reproduce the text in all the languages in which the treaty was concluded and shall be accompanied by two additional copies and by a statement setting forth the date and the method of its entry into force.

30. This provision does not accurately reflect the requirements for registration in current practice. As indicated in the *Treaty Handbook* and the official resources made available online, a certifying statement shall indicate, in addition to the information above, the title of the treaty, a list of its authentic texts, and the date and place of conclusion. The registration of the treaty requires that the certified copy provided include all annexes or attachments constituting an integral part of the treaty.[5] In the case of multilateral treaties, additional information is needed, namely, a list of all parties to the treaty, with indication of the date of deposit of their respective instruments of consent to be bound, the nature of those instruments (ratification, accession, acceptance, etc.), the date of entry into force of the treaty for each party and the text of any reservations or declarations.

31. As noted above, to facilitate the implementation of Article 102, the General Assembly has encouraged States to provide, where available, copies in electronic format of the texts of treaties submitted for registration, as well as courtesy translations in English or French or both. Consequently, the Secretariat today requires only one certified true copy of a treaty in paper form, but requests that an additional copy be provided in electronic format. The Secretariat also requests courtesy translations, if available, which are essential to speed up the registration process and ensure the timely publication of the *Treaty Series*. However, courtesy translations are rarely received, which often has an impact on the amount of time needed for registration and publication.

32. In the light of the considerations set out above, the Assembly may wish to reiterate its call for Member States to consider providing, where available, translations in English or French or both of treaties submitted for registration. The Assembly may also wish to amend article 5 of the Regulations to reflect the current practice, as described above, thus providing reliable guidelines to States in the registration process.

E. Facilitating the further use of electronic resources in the registration process (article 9)

33. Article 9 of the regulations provides that certified extracts from the register shall be issued at the request of any Member State or party to the treaty. Its original objective was to ensure that Member States could have access to information contained in the register.

34. This is one of several provisions in the regulations that have become outdated as a result of the increased use of information technology (IT). Modern IT tools have revolutionized this area of work. Today, the Treaty Section handles the entire registration and publication process electronically with its customized Treaty Information and Publication System. The United Nations Treaty Collection[6] provides comprehensive information on registered treaties, made available in real time both to Member States and to the general public. Electronic tools are also offered to enable users to search for information in the complete database of registered treaties.

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[5] *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, Supplement No. 6, vol. VI, Articles 92-111 of the Charter* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.V.6), art. 102.

[6] See https://treaties.un.org.

35. IT has therefore become an essential instrument in achieving the goals of Article 102. It has promoted efficiencies and allowed the prompt and wide dissemination of registration information, which renders obsolete certain formal requirements provided for in the regulations. It also offers further potential efficiencies that could be explored with a more streamlined registration and publication process and adequate resources.

36. In recent years, the General Assembly has repeatedly welcomed the efforts made to develop and enhance the electronic treaty database and encouraged the continuation of such efforts, while bearing in mind that many developing countries lack affordable access to information and communication technologies.[7]

37. In the light of the considerations set out above, the General Assembly may wish to consider amending article 9 to affirm the principle of the public accessibility of the register. It may also wish to reaffirm, in a resolution, its support for the electronic treaty database as an essential tool in the achievement of the goals of Article 102, and explore avenues for its further development and enhancement.

F. Considering whether the current publication policy meets the needs of Member States (article 12)

38. Article 12, paragraph 1, of the regulations provides that the Secretariat shall publish as soon as possible in a single series every treaty or international agreement which is registered or filed and recorded, in the original languages, followed by a translation in English and French. Paragraph 2 lists specific categories of treaties which the Secretariat has the option not to publish in extenso (limited publication), and paragraph 3 indicates that such a decision shall be made taking into account, inter alia, the practical value that might accrue from in extenso publication. Under paragraph 4, treaties subject to limited publication shall be made available to any State or international organization upon request, as well as to private persons against payment. Paragraph 5 identifies the information that shall be included in the series.

39. These provisions are implemented through the continuous publication of the United Nations *Treaty Series*, which contains the full texts, in all authentic languages, of treaties registered or filed and deposited, as well as translations in English and French. With respect to a treaty subject to limited publication, the series omits its text, but indicates its full title in English and French, as well as information on the parties, date and mode of entry into force and authentic texts, as well as the number and date of registration and the registering entity.

40. It follows that the *Treaty Series* is probably the most multilingual publication of the United Nations, containing the texts of treaties in an estimated 100 languages.

41. The requirement that the full texts of all published treaties be translated into English and French imposes a heavy burden on the Secretariat and has historically been the main cause for delays in the publication of the *Treaty Series*. As early as in the era of the League of Nations, the Secretariat drew the attention of Member States to the backlog caused by the need to translate treaties, and it has expressed the same concern to the General Assembly on several occasions since, for example, in the 1950s, the 1970s and the 1990s. The translation of treaties, which is handled by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, is a delicate, time-consuming and expensive endeavour that often requires the use of external contractors (in particular when a treaty is not in one of the official

[7] See resolutions 70/118, para. 8 (c), and 71/148, para. 8 (c).

languages of the United Nations). Significant amounts of time and resources are also employed to review the accuracy of translations with a view to their publication.

42. The backlog in the publication of the *Treaty Series* is therefore a systemic issue that persists today. While there is currently no backlog in registration (which is usually effected in the month that follows the submission of a treaty), the *Treaty Series* continues to experience a backlog, owing largely to delays in translation. As of April 2017, the latest available printed volume of the *Treaty Series* corresponded to treaties registered in January 2012; approximately 862 requests for translation were pending completion, corresponding to an estimated 16,651 pages of translations to be published in the *Treaty Series*.

43. In the past, Member States have indicated that an interval of one year between registration and publication is generally considered reasonable.[8] As indicated above, the General Assembly has occasionally adopted measures to alleviate the burden of translation, such as the limited publication policy or the call for States to provide courtesy translations, which have had varying results. In any event, the increase in the number of registered treaties imposes additional pressure on the limited resources of the Secretariat.

44. In the light of the considerations set out above, the General Assembly may wish to consider which means would be most effective in ensuring the timely publication of the *Treaty Series*. The Assembly may wish to examine, for example, whether the requirement that all published treaties be translated into English and French meets the current needs of Member States and justifies the resources devoted to it. The Assembly may choose to remove the requirement or consider alternative measures, such as the publication of translations only when they have been provided by the registering entity. The Assembly may also wish to consider broadening the limited publication policy so as not to publish in extenso wider categories of treaties or treaties that are publicly available in other authoritative sources (for example, those maintained by other international organizations).

G. Modernizing the methods for disseminating information on registered treaties (articles 13 and 14)

45. Article 13 of the regulations provides that the Secretariat shall publish every month a statement of the treaties and international agreements registered, or filed and recorded, during the preceding month, giving the dates and numbers of registration and recording. Article 14 instructs the Secretariat to send the *Treaty Series* and the statement to all Member States.

46. Pursuant to article 13, the Treaty Section publishes a statement of treaties and international agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat every month. The monthly statement used to be printed and circulated in hard copy. Since 1 April 2010,[9] in an effort to reduce paper consumption and conserve energy and resources, the paper distribution has been discontinued and the monthly statement has been made available only in electronic format on the website of the United Nations Treaty Collection and circulated through the website's automated subscription services. Nevertheless, the preparation of the monthly statement requires the use of significant time and resources.

[8] See resolution 32/144, fifth preambular para.

[9] See United Nations, note verbale No. LA 41 TR/230/Registration and Publication Requirements/2010, 3 February 2010.

47. The original purpose of the monthly statement was to provide Member States with information on registered treaties pending the publication of the *Treaty Series*. Today, however, the relevant information (including the title of the treaty, the date of conclusion, parties, submitter, etc.) is promptly made available on the Treaty Collection website at the time of registration.

48. Hard copies of the *Treaty Series* are circulated to all permanent missions at Headquarters and printed on demand. However, the complete collection of the *Treaty Series* is also available on the website, which offers a variety of electronic search tools to enable users to find information. Given the delays in the publication of the *Treaty Series*, the Treaty Section has taken the initiative of also making available on its website, promptly after registration, copies in electronic format of the full texts of registered treaties in all authentic languages, as they were submitted by the registering entity.

49. It follows that the specific requirements of articles 13 and 14 have lost their purpose in the modern environment. The General Assembly may wish to consider amending those provisions to remove formal requirements that may not be needed (for example, discontinuing the monthly statement) and recognize the role of information technology in achieving the essential principle of the publication of registration information.

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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Assistance to the Palestinian People

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 71/126, contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people and an assessment of needs still unmet and proposals for responding to them. It provides a description of efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Government, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions.

During the reporting period (April 2016-March 2017), negative trends on the ground continued, affecting the prospects for peace and realization of the two-State solution. The United Nations continued its efforts to respond to humanitarian and development challenges in the context of occupation.

The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan, requiring $547 million, outlines the programming to address urgent humanitarian needs throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. In addition, following the damage incurred during the 2014 hostilities, the detailed needs assessment and recovery framework for Gaza estimated needs of $3.9 billion for reconstruction and recovery in Gaza.

The Government of the State of Palestine continued to implement the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014-2016: State-building to Sovereignty and, on 22 February 2017, launched the national policy agenda for 2017-2022. The national policy agenda has three pillars: path to independence, Government reform and sustainable development. It identifies 29 national policies. In the agenda, citizens are "put first" and many of its priorities are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In support of those efforts, the United Nations continued to implement the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2014-2017.

* A/72/50.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 71/126, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its seventy-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of that resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people and an assessment of the needs still unmet and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. The reporting period is from April 2016 to March 2017.

2. Information on the living and socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people is provided in several reports prepared by other United Nations agencies and submitted to various United Nations bodies, in particular: the annual report on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan; the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/71/13); *Common Country Analysis 2016: Leave No One Behind — A Perspective on Vulnerability and Structural Disadvantage in Palestine* (United Nations country team, occupied Palestinian territory, 2016); and the reports of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in April and September 2016.

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several complementary strategic and resource mobilization documents. The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan seeks $547 million to address the most urgent humanitarian needs, including by enhancing the protective environment and improving access to essential services for the most vulnerable groups throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2014-2017 presents the United Nations strategic response to Palestinian development priorities contained in the Palestinian National Development Plan for 2014-2016: State-building to Sovereignty.

4. Throughout the year, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process continued its efforts to support the peace process and to promote coordination and dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, the United Nations, the region and the international community.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

5. The reporting period was characterized by a significant decline in the levels of violence and attacks compared with the period October 2015-March 2016, when tensions were significantly higher. Attacks by Palestinians against Israelis, including by stabbing and vehicle ramming, and the incitement that encourages such acts, continued, albeit at a lower level. Settlement activities showed an upward trend, and the rates of demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures remained high. Palestinian divisions persisted, despite efforts to advance reconciliation, and continue to have negative implications on economic, humanitarian and political aspects of life in the occupied Palestinian territory.

6. Several steps were taken by the international community during the reporting period with the aim of reviving the peace process. On 1 July 2016, the Quartet published a report in which it reaffirmed the support of the international community

for a negotiated two-State solution, reviewed the main trends on the ground that currently pose a serious threat to that vision, and recommended steps for the parties to take in order to create conditions that would allow a return to meaningful negotiations. On 23 December 2016, the Security Council adopted resolution 2334 (2016), in which it reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities, called for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction, and called upon both parties to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. On 15 January 2017, France hosted a conference in Paris to support the peace process, which was attended by representatives of some 70 countries.

7. Internal tensions in the Israeli Government grew as the 26 December 2016 deadline set by the Israeli High Court of Justice for the demolition of the illegal outpost of Amona approached. While their efforts to prevent the demolition of Amona failed, members of the Knesset who support settlement expansion successfully pressured coalition parties to vote in favour of the "regularization bill". The bill met with opposition from the Attorney General of Israel, who deemed it unconstitutional and a violation of international law. If implemented, the law would effectively authorize the appropriation of privately owned Palestinian land that has been used for building thousands of homes in settlements. Its adoption marks a significant shift in the long-standing Israeli position concerning the legal status of the occupied territory. Since its approval on 6 February 2017, several petitions have been filed against it before the High Court of Justice, and its implementation is likely to remain on hold until a judgment has been passed.

8. There was a significant increase in settlement activities during the reporting period. According to official statistics, the second quarter of 2016 saw construction of 1,102 housing units in Area C, the highest quarterly figure during the current term of the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Between April and December 2016, construction started for 2,215 units, almost double the figure for the equivalent period in 2015 (1,167). Planning of new housing units also advanced throughout most of the reporting period, particularly during the first quarter of 2017, when 4,000 housing units were advanced in Area C, with some 250 reaching final approval stage and tenders being issued for another 800. By comparison, the total number of units advanced, approved and tendered for in 2016 was around 3,000. In East Jerusalem, plans for around 1,500 housing units were advanced, yet none reached the final stage of approval. Tenders for 320 units were issued in 2016, marking a decline compared with 580 in 2015 and over 2,000 each year during the period 2012-2014. Evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem as a result of legal moves by settler organizations continued, enlarging the Jewish enclaves in Palestinian neighbourhoods of the city. Dozens of Palestinian herder and Bedouin communities in Area C continued to face pressure to relocate from Israeli authorities, citing a lack of building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. Some communities are under imminent threat of being forced to relocate to other Area C locations.

9. Reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas failed to achieve progress during the reporting period. The parties continue to disagree on the two main issues under discussion: formation of a national unity Government and the organization of parliamentary and presidential elections. In an effort to promote reconciliation, the President, Mahmoud Abbas, held a meeting with the Chair of the Hamas Political Bureau, Khalid Mish'al, in Qatar in October 2016. Subsequently, representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Hamas and Islamic Jihad agreed, in a meeting held in Beirut in January 2017, on the need to start consultations to form a national unity Government that would work to implement previous reconciliation deals, end

the Palestinian division and prepare for general elections. Also in January, the Russian Federation sought to advance Palestinian reconciliation by hosting a meeting between the Palestinian factions in Moscow. Despite those inter-factional meetings, the sides remain unable to reach consensus on achieving genuine Palestinian unity, on the basis of non-violence, democracy and the Palestine Liberation Organization principles. In another setback to achieving unity, Hamas established the Administrative Committee, a parallel institution to run local ministries in Gaza, on 16 March 2017. Disputes between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas over responsibilities aggravated the electricity crisis in Gaza in January 2017.

10. Municipal elections originally set for October 2016 were postponed for four months after the Palestinian High Court ruled against the Government's arrangement for conducting the elections in Gaza. The Government subsequently established a designated electoral court to resolve the issue of the "illegal" courts in Gaza; Hamas rejected that decision and expressed dissatisfaction with the Government's failure to hold municipal elections in 2016. Municipal elections are now expected to be held exclusively in the West Bank on 13 May 2017.

11. Socioeconomic hardship, underpinned by the persistent occupation and fragile democratic institutions, continued to affect stability in the West Bank and threatened to erode the achievements of the Palestinian State-building agenda. During the second half of 2016, frequent clashes occurred between Palestinian security forces and residents of the Balata refugee camp in Nablus and in the nearby Old City, causing fatalities and injuries to both civilians and security personnel. Those clashes came in the context of increased Palestinian law and order operations in and around the camp and were particularly severe amid political tensions before and after Fatah's seventh party congress at the end of November 2016.

12. The ceasefire that brought an end to the hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza on 26 August 2014 has held but remains fragile. There were fewer incidents of demonstrations along the security fence between Gaza and Israel and fewer incidents of cross-border shootings compared to the previous reporting period. In April and May 2016, Israeli security forces discovered two tunnels penetrating its territory from Gaza, leading in one case to a temporary escalation of hostilities in which militants fired 40 mortars and eight rockets at Israel and Israeli forces. One Palestinian was killed as a result of subsequent Israeli strikes. In total, 12 rockets that were fired indiscriminately from Gaza landed in Israel without causing casualties.

13. The United Nations continued to support the Palestinian Government in implementing its $3.9 billion framework for reconstruction and recovery in Gaza. The vast majority of damage to schools, hospitals and water and electricity facilities have been repaired, with the reconstruction of six totally destroyed schools, a clinic and a hospital still ongoing. Meanwhile, 40,000 people remain internally displaced inside Gaza, waiting for their homes to be rebuilt. Of the 17,800 homes which were totally destroyed or severely damaged to the point of being uninhabitable, 57 per cent have been rebuilt and reconstruction work is ongoing on another 14 per cent. However, $115 million is still lacking for the reconstruction of more than 2,800 totally destroyed homes. Of the 153,200 homes which were partially damaged in 2014, 56 per cent have been repaired and work is ongoing to repair another 7 per cent. However, $85 million is still needed for the remaining repairs.

14. The temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism continued to facilitate the entry of material considered by Israel as having dual civil-military use. In the reporting period, nearly 750,000 tons of cement entered Gaza through the Mechanism, an 18 per cent increase compared to the previous year. The increase happened despite new restrictions on cement in 2016, including a six-week

suspension of private-sector cement imports through the Mechanism in April and May 2016, and an artificial ceiling of 90 trucks of cement per day for the remainder of the year. Meanwhile, the import of "dual-use" items, other than cement and rebar, remains strictly curtailed, with only 285 items approved during the fourth quarter of 2016, compared to 1,796 items during 2015.

15. The Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel have taken several affirmative steps during the reporting period, some in line with the recommendations of the Quartet report. These include agreements on water infrastructure in the West Bank, electricity, 3G and postal services, which all have the potential to strengthen Palestinian civil authority. Implementation of those agreements, however, has been slow.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

16. Economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory were characterized by continued recovery from the conflict in 2014. Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 4.1 per cent over 2015 levels, as compared with 3.4 per cent growth in 2015. Overall growth was driven by 3.0 per cent growth in the West Bank and 7.7 per cent growth in Gaza. This resulted in positive growth in per capita GDP in both Gaza (4.2 per cent) and the West Bank (0.5 per cent).

17. In 2016, 26.9 per cent of the labour force was unemployed, compared to 25.9 per cent the year before. Unemployment increased in both Gaza (from 41.0 per cent to 41.7 per cent) and the West Bank (from 17.3 per cent to 18.2 per cent). Youth unemployment continued to be the defining challenge of the Palestinian labour market. In 2016, 43.2 per cent of the labour force in the 20-24 age group was unemployed.

Humanitarian developments

18. During the reporting period, 60 Palestinians, including 15 children, were killed in direct conflict incidents (the vast majority by Israeli security forces) across the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, and some 2,200 Palestinians, including 600 children, were injured. Thirty-four suspected Palestinian perpetrators, including seven children, and 12 Israelis were killed in the context of stabbing, ramming and shootings attacks. This marks a major decline in violence across the West Bank, compared to the previous reporting period.

19. The targeting of Israeli civilians by Palestinians, and the possible use of excessive force in the Israeli security forces' response to these attacks, as well as during protests and clashes, has remained a key protection concern, compounded by the perceived lack of accountability and effective remedies for the loss of civilian life and property.

20. In the West Bank, the reporting period witnessed a 10 per cent decline in the number of Palestinian homes and livelihood-related structures destroyed or seized, compared to the previous reporting period, which witnessed a record number of such incidents since 2008, when the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs began documenting demolitions. During the reporting period, 1,244 people (one half of them children) were affected by the demolition or sealing of 21 family homes of perpetrators, or alleged perpetrators, of attacks against Israelis.

21. As of February 2017, there were 335 Palestinian children in Israel Prison Service facilities (323 boys and 12 girls). Of them, 2 were under administrative

detention, 217 in various stages of their prosecution, and 116 already convicted and serving their sentences. These numbers reflect a downward trend during the reporting period. Between January and April 2016, on average, 426 children were held in Israeli military detention per month, which marked a 95 per cent increase compared to the monthly average in 2015 (219 children). During the reporting period, UNRWA referred over 60 cases of detained children to legal support and other services.

22. On 31 May 2016, Hamas executed three men charged with murder, the first executions since early 2014. The executions were implemented without the approval of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, required under Palestinian law. During the reporting period, 22 new death sentences were passed by Gaza courts: 13 by civil courts against people convicted of murder and 9 by military courts against people convicted of treason; 13 death sentences were confirmed on appeal.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

23. In Gaza, restrictions on land and sea access imposed by the Government of Israel remained in place. Access of United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members to and from Gaza deteriorated during the reporting period, and denial by Israel of duty-related entry and exit permits for national staff reached concerning levels. While some measures have eased restrictions, obstructive policies on access and movement of Palestinian staff to and from Gaza largely remained in place.

24. During the reporting period, at least 289 reported incidents of delayed or denied access of United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members were reported at Israeli checkpoints, affecting 1,834 staff members. Around 41 of these took place as United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members crossed the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing to and from Gaza.

25. Access to and movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, remained restricted. The continued restrictions on Palestinian access to land, social services and economic opportunities in East Jerusalem and Area C hinder development efforts and severely constrain efforts to improve living conditions and reduce vulnerability.

26. Following the assassination of one of its militant leaders in Gaza on 24 March 2017, Hamas, in an unprecedented move, imposed a 10-day ban on movement from Gaza to Israel, except for select categories, including patients referred for medical treatment outside Gaza, relatives of Palestinian prisoners in Israel and three ministers of the Palestinian Government of national consensus. During the closure, fishing was also prohibited, resulting in the cancellation of over 5,000 fishing trips, thereby undermining the livelihoods of some 1,500 fishermen's families already affected by the six-mile access limit imposed by Israel. In addition, 111 patients were denied exit from Gaza to Israel by Hamas.

Barrier

27. The Office for the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established pursuant to the General Assembly resolution ES-10/17 of 24 January 2007, continued its outreach and claim intake activities. More than 61,000 claims and over 650,000 supporting documents have been collected. Claim intake activities have been completed in eight out of nine affected Palestinian governorates — Tubas, Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, Salfit, Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem — and work is at an advanced stage in the Jerusalem governorate, including in and around East Jerusalem.

III. United Nations response

A. Human and social development

28. During the reporting period, the United Nations coordinated and delivered humanitarian assistance, including food assistance, to over 1.58 million people, protection assistance to nearly 1 million people, health and nutrition services to over 1.2 million people, water and sanitation to over 600,000 people, and over 150,000 people received some form of shelter and non-food item assistance.

29. As outlined in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, United Nations development programming centred on six strategic areas: economic empowerment, livelihoods, decent work and food security; governance, rule of law, justice and human rights; education; health; social protection; and urban development, natural resource management and infrastructure.

Education

30. UNRWA provided free primary education to over 310,000 students enrolled in 363 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and the West Bank.

31. United Nations agencies continued to meet teachers' capacity-building needs in the area of quality, inclusive and child-friendly education. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the training of teachers on the implementation of a non-violence policy through teacher training in the West Bank and Gaza. UNICEF training of teachers and principals on early childhood development practices benefited over 1,700 children in 49 targeted schools in the West Bank and Gaza.

32. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) scaled up the Al Fakhoora Dynamic Futures programme, supporting an additional 266 scholarships, which brought the total number of scholarships to 870.

33. United Nations agencies supported access to education through the construction and rehabilitation of education facilities, including the construction of a boys' school in Jerusalem and 12 community libraries in the West Bank and Gaza, and the rehabilitation of five kindergartens.

34. In Gaza, UNDP improved access to quality education for 88,311 students (43,997 female and 44,314 male) through the rehabilitation and reconstruction of 37 institutions which sustained substantial damage in the 2014 hostilities, including 12 partially damaged public schools, 13 private schools, 5 training centres and 7 higher education institutions. Similarly, UNRWA supported the construction or reconstruction of 10 new schools. The reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools was inspired by principles of "Building back better" and child-friendly schools.

Health

35. UNRWA provided health-care services in the West Bank through 43 health-care facilities, including six mobile clinics, 24 primary health-care centres, one hospital and one non-communicable disease referral centre, employing over 800 staff. In Gaza, health-care services were provided through 22 primary health-care facilities employing over 961 staff. Annually, an average of 27,795 Palestine refugees in the West Bank and 13,053 Palestine refugees in Gaza received assistance for hospital-care costs.

36. UNICEF continued to support the Ministry of Health to scale up the baby-friendly hospital initiative to encourage exclusive breastfeeding, training 55 nurses (30 men and 25 women) and doctors. By the end of 2016, nine maternity wards were certified as part of the initiative in the West Bank and Gaza. A total of 7,481 women and their newborns, and 60 midwives, were trained by UNICEF on the provision of postnatal home-visiting services. The World Health Organization (WHO) trained over 300 Ministry of Health personnel and health-care providers in reproductive health.

37. United Nations agencies contributed to health sector infrastructure through the upgrading of the chemotherapy department of a private hospital in East Jerusalem to serve at least 1,500 patients annually, the rehabilitation of the Princess Basma Centre for children with special needs and provision of surgical and medical equipment to five hospitals in Jerusalem and the West Bank. They also ensured that 10,214 uninsured or partially uninsured patients received subsidized health care at three main hospitals in Jerusalem. Equipment was provided to three primary health-care clinics and one hospital specialized in detecting, treating and referring cases of gender-based violence. WHO supported the Ministry of Health in the provision of essential equipment and training to improve breast cancer screening.

38. To respond to shortages in health supplies in Gaza, WHO assisted in filling urgent gaps of essential drugs, coordinated delivery of medical supplies from various donors and distributed fuel to health facilities to ensure continuity of health emergency services. UNDP expanded, rehabilitated and equipped medical facilities in Gaza, including the construction of neonatal intensive care units, increasing the overall capacity of neonatal services in Gaza to benefit 6,177 newborns.

Water and sanitation

39. UNICEF continued to support water, sanitation and hygiene efforts in schools, with 128,500 children (50 per cent of whom were girls) participating in hygiene promotion in 156 primary schools (116 in Gaza and 40 in the West Bank). In 2016, around 68,500 children from those same schools also received tankered water. An additional 237 schools (135 in Gaza and 102 in the West Bank) used the UNICEF-Ministry of Education and Higher Education hygiene education manual to promote key hygiene practices. A total of 1,734 hygiene kits were distributed in the West Bank and 176,000 in Gaza.

40. In Area C, at least 4,200 Palestinians benefited from the rehabilitation of a water network that reduced water loss to zero and the cost of water by 40 per cent. UNDP rehabilitated and expanded the landfill in Jericho city and built a recovery facility that will be used for sorting and recycling solid waste in the Jericho area. The total number of beneficiaries is around 62,000 residents in Jericho city and the Jordan River valley area.

41. In Gaza, UNICEF, in close partnership with the Palestinian Water Authority and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, increased access to safe drinking water for 75,000 people through the construction of the first phase of a desalination plant. UNDP improved the water, wastewater supply and wastewater system through the construction of infrastructure works.

Employment

42. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the International Trade Centre, through a joint programme, established a full-service hub, which provides guidance to women-owned or women-run small, medium-sized and microenterprises and cooperatives through the

business development cycle. FAO continued to support 27 cooperatives (including six women's cooperatives) through activities aimed at increasing productivity and access to local as well as international markets, benefiting 1,318 people. In Gaza, the International Labour Organization supported capacity-building and business plan development for two cooperatives.

43. UN-Women supported 45 women-owned or women-run small, medium-sized and microenterprises, with 34 such enterprises given grants to enhance their businesses. The reporting period saw the 45 enterprises experience a 28 per cent increase in sales in the local market, a 4 per cent increase regionally and a 5 per cent increase internationally. In addition, there was a 21 per cent increase in the number of women employed full-time by targeted small, medium-sized and microenterprises (158 employees) compared to the previous reporting period.

44. UNDP provided skill-enhancement programmes to 200 young people in Jerusalem. 169 graduates from East Jerusalem were placed in employment, 131 of whom (78 per cent) were employed on a permanent basis (84 female and 47 male). An additional 28 marginalized families were economically supported in East Jerusalem through small-business grants. Through its infrastructure works, UNDP generated 11,741 working days in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and 13,910 temporary working days and 554 permanent working days in Gaza.

Targeted social protection

45. During the reporting period, UNRWA distributed 394,634 food parcels to 20,623 Palestine refugee households (98,935 individuals) in Gaza, and UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued to implement the e-voucher programme targeting the most vulnerable Palestinians through the provision of emergency food, water, sanitation and hygiene items, and school uniforms, reaching approximately 13,000 households with hygiene kits and 8,083 children with education assistance. Of those that benefited, approximately 4,000 households gained new knowledge about good nutrition and hygiene practices through a 12-week awareness-raising course. Through its winterization initiative in Gaza, UNICEF provided 620 households with e-vouchers for water, sanitation and hygiene and winterization items.

46. WFP continued to support the Government's social safety net programme, under which 213,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank received food and cash-based transfers. UNRWA provided cash-based assistance to over 36,000 beneficiaries.

Culture

47. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) supported the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage in the West Bank and Gaza through the rehabilitation of 11 historic sites, facilitating accessibility to cultural heritage assets and public social services.

48. UNDP supported the cultural tourism industry through operation and management services for the Khan al-Wakalah historical compound in Nablus and started the rehabilitation, restoration and operation and management services for Maqam-En Nabi Musa in Area C of the Jericho governorate. Both sites are anticipated to receive 140,000 visitors annually, creating 1,800 direct and indirect job opportunities. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) supported the rehabilitation of the Dar al-Consul Complex in East Jerusalem, which provides residents and tourists with a state-of-the-art, modern and safe civic centre. The Dar al-Consul facilities and services include a one-stop shop for young people and tourists.

49. UNDP supported a total of 541 young Palestinians from 14 municipal schools in East Jerusalem to benefit from cultural activities during the reporting period.

Food security and agriculture

50. FAO supported 1,318 farmers through improved cropping practices and pest management, enhanced access to and use of water, and strengthened compliance with international quality standards and certification. A total of 3,569 dunums of land were cultivated according to international standards, with high-value crops worth an estimated $44 million marketed in total by 21 farmer cooperatives, including more than $21 million in exports and almost $90,000 worth of processed food products produced by six women's cooperatives. Post-harvest capacities were also improved with the provision of tools and equipment for forklifts for 33 cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza.

51. In the West Bank, over 800 farmers benefited from the rehabilitation of infrastructure for water management. UNDP worked with the Ministry of Agriculture to improve the productivity of 12 rural communities in the West Bank by opening 3.6 km of agricultural roads, which enabled access for more than 300 farmers to their land, and to construct water infrastructure which benefited over 1,000 farmers. In Gaza, FAO supported 340 farmers in the access-restricted areas to improve irrigation and productivity. FAO established a livestock market in Al-Thaharriyah in Hebron, providing 2,000 herders with a point of sale and access to the formal market.

Human rights, women, children and youth

52. The Palestinian Government, with technical assistance from United Nations agencies, submitted its initial State party report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/PSE/1) on 8 March 2017 and made significant progress on the six remaining reports of the core international human rights treaties. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights trained 106 representatives of human rights organizations and the Independent Commission for Human Rights, focusing on monitoring and documenting the Government's implementation of the legal commitments under the treaties. The Office also organized trainings for 139 representatives of civil society and community-based organizations on the provisions and standards in the human rights treaties to which Palestine has acceded.

53. UNDP and UN-Women supported 28,000 individuals, 55 per cent of whom were women, to benefit from legal aid by civil society organizations, and more than 6,000 women received awareness-raising on legal rights provided by civil society organizations in the West Bank and Gaza.

54. In 24 Area C communities, UNDP and UN-Women supported 800 women in participating in activities focusing on women's role in public life, following which 26 women were nominated for local government elections and received training on communication skills, community participation and local government-related issues. In Gaza, women also benefited from the Young Women Leaders programme, which provided 950 female university graduates with leadership, life-skills and self-development training.

55. The UNRWA Family and Child Protection programme in the West Bank identified 449 survivors (382 female and 67 male) of gender-based violence, domestic violence and/or other forms of abuse. All identified cases received individual counselling, and 21 critical/emergency cases were referred to specialized non-governmental organizations. In Gaza, 1,535 survivors of gender-based violence

were identified, with 1,518 cases referred to internal UNRWA service providers and an additional 17 cases referred to external partner service providers. Through these efforts, survivors accessed over 1,200 psychosocial counselling and legal service options.

56. United Nations agencies trained over 300 service providers, teachers and social counsellors on the detection of, response to and referral systems for gender-based violence cases in line with Palestinian national referral protocols and standard operating procedures. More than 11,800 survivors of gender-based violence received help from one or more of the psychosocial, health, legal and awareness-raising services in both the West Bank and Gaza. A new safe space for women and girls was set up in the West Bank, and outreach awareness activities were conducted, reaching nearly 5,000 beneficiaries.

57. UNICEF continues to lead the inter-agency working group for the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009). In 2016, the working group documented and monitored a total of 2,050 incidents of grave violations against children.

58. During the reporting period, 14,590 youth were reached through empowerment programmes supported by UNFPA, including youth-led community initiatives to reduce their vulnerabilities, and through innovative youth initiatives targeting 450 youth and 20 decision makers. UNFPA supported two youth summits held in Jerusalem, and UN-Habitat engaged youth in the design of public space. UNICEF worked with its partners to promote the civic participation of adolescents through the introduction of six innovation labs (five in the West Bank and one in Gaza). As a result of the introduction of these labs a total of 1,528 adolescents (51 per cent of whom were female) in the West Bank and 366 adolescents in Gaza benefited from safe spaces where they can conduct research after school and where they can provide innovative solutions for issues that arise in their community or lives.

Environment, housing and urban development

59. UN-Habitat successfully finished the implementation of 10 spatial planning programmes in Area C of the West Bank, which helped reduce displacement pressure on more than 32,000 Palestinians. UNDP completed infrastructure projects that support communities and institutions located in Area C, benefiting 90,000 people through the improvement of public transportation infrastructure.

60. UN-Habitat continued its support for the National Spatial Plan for the State of Palestine and advocacy efforts to develop and negotiate planning solutions with the Israeli planning authorities.

61. In East Jerusalem, UNDP supported the development of a public space serving more than 40,000 residents, a children's playground accessible for 20,000 residents, and the rehabilitation of 19 residential units. Home rehabilitation was completed for 500 disadvantaged people with a focus on women-headed households. UNDP further rehabilitated more than 15 business centres in the Old City of Jerusalem and launched revitalization interventions to support the commercial districts of Sultan Suleiman and Salah Al-Din streets.

62. In Gaza, UN-Habitat supported the updating and development of two master plans and four detailed outline plans by the municipalities and community representative communities. UNDP rehabilitated 12,600 partially damaged housing units affected by the 2014 hostilities, for 82,290 non-refugees, reconstructed 2 units in Rafah, and constructed 56 new housing units for 392 beneficiaries in the northern

Gaza Strip. UNDP started the rehabilitation and consolidation of the Gaza Industrial Estate, to directly benefit 22,000 labourers and businessmen.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

63. Most of the United Nations response focused on Gaza, which included some of the residual needs from the 2014 conflict. The 2016 response plan mobilized $280 million out of $571 million sought (49 per cent).

64. The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan seeks $547 million, of which about 68 per cent of the requirements are for Gaza. The Plan includes $282 million for the UNRWA Emergency Appeal.

65. Despite the increasing pace of reconstruction, shelter remains the primary need, with approximately 40,000 persons remaining displaced as a result of the damage and destruction of housing stemming from the 2014 conflict. As of February 2017, a funding gap remains for nearly 4,000 totally destroyed homes and 57,000 homes which sustained partial damage.

66. The United Nations Mine Action Service clearance efforts have returned a sense of security for 1,500 Gazans living, farming and rebuilding in 106 of 136 locations suspected of harbouring buried explosive remnants of war.

67. UNDP contributed to addressing the energy crisis in Gaza through the construction of photovoltaic cells and the installation of solar panels in health and water facilities, schools and higher education institutions, and rehabilitated the electricity power distribution networks in three governorates, benefiting over 500,000 people.

Emergency agriculture support

68. Access to livelihood assets and resources was restored for more than 3,000 farmers, herders and rural households, of which almost 2,600 households benefited from the rehabilitation of water reservoirs in Gaza. 160 peri-urban poor households received materials for small-scale, home-based food production units.

Emergency food support

69. In the West Bank, WFP assisted 250,000 vulnerable and food-insecure individuals, 108,000 through cash-based transfers and 142,000 through in-kind food distributions. UNRWA and WFP continued their joint in-kind food assistance programme, supporting 37,000 marginalized Bedouin and herders in 85 Bedouin communities.

70. In Gaza, 960,000 refugees received food assistance, with UNRWA distributing 654,348 food parcels to 163,596 families, a sharp increase over the 80,000 individuals reliant on food assistance in 2000. WFP provided 81,500 food-insecure non-refugees with cash-based transfers and 164,000 non-refugees with in-kind food parcels during 2016.

Emergency education support

71. UNICEF facilitated access to education for 4,667 children and 333 teachers on their way to and from school in high-risk locations, particularly Area C, by providing a protective presence. Additionally, 6,760 children who continue to face learning challenges as a result of the 2014 conflict benefited from remedial education in Gaza.

72. The United Nations Mine Action Service, UNICEF and UNRWA, along with community-based organizations, ensured risk education messaging regarding explosive remnants of war was broadcast across Gaza. UNICEF reached 162,000 children and caregivers through education messages on the risks related to explosive remnants of war and unexploded ordnances. The United Nations Mine Action Service also provided 1,800 direct risk education sessions to 48,000 beneficiaries, including 34,000 children.

Emergency health support

73. UNICEF reached over 48,738 vulnerable children in Gaza with child protection services and psychosocial and case management support. Individual counselling was provided to 13,941 at-risk children, 49 per cent of whom were female, and structured group counselling was provided to 12,142 children attending UNRWA schools. Through UNRWA health centres, psychosocial and protection interventions were provided to 14,589 clients, primarily in the form of individual and group counselling. In addition, 28,007 public awareness sessions were held in schools, health centres and other facilities.

74. In the West Bank, the UNRWA emergency health programme supported six mobile health clinics operating in more than 66 locations, serving a population of 123,719 individuals and delivering 113,325 patient consultations. UNRWA provided mental health and psychosocial support to 55 Bedouin communities facing multiple protection threats. During the reporting period, six mobile psychosocial teams ensured that more than 9,200 individuals had monthly access to psychosocial and mental health support.

Emergency housing support

75. In Gaza, the United Nations Mine Action Service provided reconstruction partners with 92 risk assessments, 30 site-specific training sessions on the mitigation of explosive remnants of war, continuous quality assurance and support for disposal of explosive ordnances enabling reconstruction of vital infrastructure and housing.

76. As of December 2016, UNRWA provided cash assistance to over 81,000 families. UNDP provided cash assistance to 1,075 non-refugee families displaced by the 2014 conflict, allowing access to temporary shelter while their homes were being repaired or reconstructed. UNRWA provided cash assistance to 124 Palestine refugee families (more than 750 individuals) following home demolitions by the Israeli authorities. Further, 678 Palestine refugee families, comprising 3,771 individuals, received cash assistance and referrals to meet humanitarian needs following search and arrest operations by Israeli security forces in Palestine refugee camps leading to physical damages of their homes and emotional trauma.

Emergency income generation

77. In 2016, UNRWA in Gaza generated 4,651 temporary positions under the job creation programme and over 8,900 direct and indirect jobs through UNRWA construction projects. UNRWA also employed 14,179 area staff to run its operations and provided food vouchers and cash-for-work opportunities to over 15,750 refugee households, 8,037 households (43,199 individuals) in 19 Palestine refugee camps and 7,713 households (41,457 individuals) outside camps. This provided a cash injection of approximately $8,501,435 to food-insecure refugee households. Through the electronic food voucher programme, 46,010 Palestine refugees outside of camps were assisted with a total value of more than $4.8 million.

Emergency water and sanitation support

78. In the West Bank, UNICEF delivered safe drinking water to nearly 56,000 people in 2016. Another 14,000 people benefited from the installation of water infrastructure and storage facilities.

79. In Gaza, UNDP rehabilitated and reconstructed five water wells, 1,200 meters of water networks and two storage tanks that were destroyed in the 2014 conflict. Those efforts included the supply of electricity power networks to the two main sewage pumping stations of Beit Hanoun to mitigate the flooding of sewage water. UNICEF, in partnership with the Palestinian Water Authority and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, ensured that 44,130 people had increased access to improved sanitation through the rehabilitation and construction of wastewater networks in the Gaza southern governorates; 41,000 people gained access to water through repairs of water networks; and an additional 37,000 people gained access to water through the reconstruction of three damaged water wells.

80. UNRWA provided solid waste management in all eight Palestine refugee camps in Gaza. In addition, UNRWA provided fuel for the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility and Gaza municipalities to operate water and wastewater assets, municipal solid waste management services, storm water pumps to alleviate the flooding risk, and water wells affected by power outages.

Rubble removal and solid waste management

81. UNDP completed the removal of rubble and debris resulting from the 2014 hostilities in Gaza, benefiting 163,527 people (79,990 male and 83,537 female), and generating 42,122 working days for 717 workers from the population of the affected areas. The programme also supported the creation of emergency jobs, generating 166,372 working days from the community in clean-up activity for 3,707 workers (3,654 male and 53 female).

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

82. UNDP and UN-Women provided support to justice and security sector institutions, in order to mainstream a gender perspective in policies and planning processes, resulting in the Palestine Civil Police becoming the first police force in the Arab States to adopt a gender strategy.

83. The first-ever social security law for private sector workers and their family members was signed into law by President Abbas on 29 September 2016. In December 2016, the Board of Directors of the social security institution was appointed, with the Minister of Labour as Chair. The International Labour Organization has carried out an actuarial valuation of the social security schemes administered by the Public Pension Agency of Palestine.

84. UNICEF and UNDP supported the implementation of the new juvenile protection law, with training to juvenile judges. Enforcement offices for the family courts were established across the West Bank, and support was provided to the Palestinian Maintenance Fund. A national committee on legal aid was established, along with a specialized data base to support legal harmonization. A dispute resolution centre in East Jerusalem was established for civil and commercial solutions for disputes among Jerusalemites.

85. UNODC supported the Ministry of Justice through the training of seven forensic doctors, the establishment of three forensic medicine clinics, provision of equipment and supplies, provision of training to forensic nurses, and

the development of standard operating procedures in accordance with international standards.

86. FAO supported the Ministry of Agriculture and national institutions to coordinate active surveillance and monitoring in support of the national animal identification system, resulting in a registration rate of 92 per cent of targeted livestock.

87. UNESCO provided technical expertise to the drafting of the Basic Education Law by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, which was signed by the President on 9 April 2017 following its endorsement by the Cabinet.

88. UN-Habitat supported coordinated advocacy by key Palestinian institutions, including in the drafting and adoption of the National Advocacy Strategy for Planning and Development in Area C of the West Bank.

89. UNDP developed and finalized a unified human resource management and development system that was implemented in seven ministries and finalized the General Personnel Council strategic plan for the period 2017-2022. The Palestinian International Cooperation Agency was established to provide expertise and knowledge in support of other countries, and local economic development units were established in five municipalities.

90. UNDP worked with the International Trade Centre and national trade institutions to expand markets and regional commercial connections and to develop the Palestinian export sector through initiatives including bilateral agreements for access to five international markets. UNDP also trained Palestinian Embassy staff to enable them to function as economic attachés to advocate for expanding trade and business relations around the world.

91. UNDP supported the Palestinian Government in submitting the first national communication report and national adaptation plan to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November 2016, endorsed by 12 line ministries. The Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian water authorities developed the first climate change visualization tool in the region, presenting 10 climatic indicators for 2030. UNDP trained 15 water and climate change professionals from the three countries in climate change modelling and visualization tools.

92. UNFPA supported the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in developing the report *Palestine 2030 — Demographic Change: Opportunities for Development*, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the projected population on social sectors.

93. United Nations agencies supported the development of an information management system in the Ministry of Health to document survivals of gender-based violence and to ensure harmonized data collection, monitoring and reporting of gender-based violence cases based on the national referral system. The first national drug rehabilitation and treatment centre was also established with the Ministry of Health, with drug rehabilitation and treatment protocols, standard operating procedures and a code of ethics. Assistance was also provided to improve patient records and registries, and to strengthen hospital information systems and update hospital contingency plans.

94. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Development in conducting the first comprehensive study on the situation of children with disabilities in the West Bank and Gaza, and subsequently revised the Disability Law to ensure its alignment with international standards, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

95. UNICEF assisted the intersectoral national Early Childhood Development Committee to finalize the national strategy and early childhood interventions plan for the period 2017-2022, with an emphasis on early detection for children with developmental delays and disabilities and intervention services, focusing on the most vulnerable and hard to reach children.

96. WFP supported the Civil Defence in building capacity in the area of emergency preparedness and response, focusing on coordination and search and rescue. WFP delivered emergency response tools and is finalizing three governorate emergency operation and coordination centres to expand the ability of the Civil Defence to coordinate and respond to large-scale natural disasters.

D. Private sector development

97. In Gaza, 4,989 microfinance loans with a value of $7.4 million were disbursed. In the West Bank, 11,841 loans valued at over $16 million were disbursed, with Palestine refugees receiving 2,638 loans (valued at $3,484,604). Women and youth received 40 per cent of the loans extended.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

98. Under the auspices of the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process/United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, collaboration and coordination between the numerous donor and United Nations forums continued during the reporting period. The humanitarian country team met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. With the support of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations country team continued to coordinate its United Nations Development Assistance Framework programming, in alignment with the Palestinian National Development Plan priorities. Efforts to forge constructive partnerships between the United Nations, the Government of the State of Palestine and the broader aid community continued. The United Nations country team developed the common country analysis and the second United Nations Development Assistance Framework to cover the period 2018-2022 in alignment with the Palestinian Authority's National Policy Agenda. The United Nations continued preparation of regular Ad Hoc Liaison Committee reports, strategies and guidance for development and humanitarian work. In particular, the United Nations finalized its strategy for East Jerusalem and continued the implementation of the Hebron strategy for development and economic initiatives, and together with other humanitarian actors, the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

99. The fiscal position of the Government of the State of Palestine remained fragile despite improvements in fiscal performance. The Government improved its fiscal performance with strong growth in revenue and restrained growth in expenditure during the year, reducing its budget deficit from around 11 per cent of GDP in 2015 to an estimated 8 per cent of GDP in 2016. This was enabled by large transfers on account of lump sum payments on the clearance revenue account. Direct budget support by donors continued to decline, and arrears continued to accumulate.

Donor coordination

100. The Palestinian Government launched the national policy agenda for the period 2017-2022 on 22 February 2017. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2018-2022 is being formulated. The coordination of humanitarian assistance and advocacy, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, continued.

101. In June 2016, the Area C Coordination Office within the Prime Minister's Office became operational, with the role of addressing both humanitarian and development issues and information-sharing and donor coordination.

102. The local aid coordination structure continued to serve as a key forum for donors and the Palestinian Government.

103. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met twice during the reporting period, in Brussels on 19 April 2016 and in New York on 19 September 2016.

V. Unmet needs

104. Given the continued humanitarian needs, the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan is requesting $547 million, of which $282 million is also included in the UNRWA Emergency Appeal. To date, only 9 per cent of the requested amount for the Plan has been raised. Additional support is also urgently needed for the UNRWA core budget, which faces a predicted shortfall of $115 million for 2017.

105. Of the $3.5 billion pledged at the Cairo pledging conference for the recovery and reconstruction of Gaza in October 2014 (in the detailed needs assessment and recovery framework, a total need of $3.9 billion was estimated), some 46 per cent had been disbursed as of July 2016. However, only $16 million of these pledges has gone towards financing the productive sector needs identified in the detailed needs assessment and recovery framework (less than 3 per cent of the $602 million needed). Moreover, just over $100 million is still needed for the reconstruction of nearly 3,000 homes which were totally destroyed in 2014.

106. UNRWA is seeking $402 million in its 2017 Emergency Appeal to meet the minimum humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory. A total of $355 million is required for programme interventions in Gaza, including $89.4 million for emergency food assistance, $138.4 million for emergency shelter assistance, $69.9 million for emergency cash-for-work assistance, $4.5 million for emergency health, and $5.0 million for education in emergencies.

VI. Challenges

107. During the reporting period, the operating environment remained challenging, owing in large part to restrictions on access and movement. In Gaza, the ability of United Nations organizations and partners to deliver timely assistance was limited at times due to physical barriers such as checkpoints, a restrictive permit policy for humanitarian personnel, and restrictions on the import of materials into Gaza. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, restrictions on movement and access, the demolition of Palestinian infrastructure and the associated displacement of Palestinians also impacted United Nations operations.

108. The lack of progress on intra-Palestinian reconciliation continues to impact the ability of the United Nations to reach and provide comprehensive assistance for institution-strengthening and the statehood agenda. Announcements by the

Government of Israel during the reporting period, in particular in relation to settlement expansion in early 2017, contributed to an escalation of tensions.

109. Development and humanitarian funding to the State of Palestine has continued to decline during the reporting period, requiring greater strategic focus of interventions and identifying opportunities for synergies with other implementing entities.

VII. Conclusions

110. The operational context for the work of the United Nations in the reporting period was increasingly difficult due to the challenges outlined above, along with a constrained funding environment. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008), 1860 (2009) and 2334 (2016), an end to the occupation that began in 1967, and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.

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Seventy-second session
Item 115 (d) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 11 May 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations has the honour to state that the Government of Pakistan has decided to present its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2018-2020, at elections to be held in 2017 in New York.

Pakistan is strongly committed to the promotion and principle of the protection of human rights. In pursuance of its deep respect for human rights, and on the basis of the rich experience and expertise acquired from its association with the Human Rights Council, Pakistan looks forward to contributing further by engaging proactively with the Council, its entire machinery, processes and initiatives, as well as with the members of the international community, United Nations agencies and members of civil society.

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations would be grateful if the present note verbale and its annex, setting out the candidacy of Pakistan and the written pledges and commitments of Pakistan for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, could be included in the final document to be produced for the forthcoming elections and be circulated among Member States.

* A/72/50

17-08083 (E) 240517

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 11 May 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Pakistan to the Human Rights Council, 2018-2020

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Pakistan is honoured to present its candidature for membership to the Human Rights Council for the term 2018-2020, for which elections will be held in October 2017, during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly in New York. Deeply committed to the cause of universal human rights, Pakistan looks forward to the continued support, confidence and trust of the international community in its endeavour to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, including through the work of the Human Rights Council.

2. Pakistan is a founding member of the Human Rights Council and previously served on it from 2006 to 2011 and from 2013 to 2015. Through its presence in the Council, Pakistan would endeavour to further its contribution to the collective efforts to help consolidate the global human rights agenda and to advance the promotion and protection of human rights at the national and international levels.

3. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251, following is a brief account of Pakistan's contribution, voluntary pledges and commitments in the field of human rights.

Contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and progress on past pledges

4. Pakistan's commitment to human rights emanates in the first place from its Constitution and duty towards its people. We are determined to ensure that every Pakistani citizen lives in equality, dignity and freedom, with complete protection of fundamental human rights without any discrimination. The words of the founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, are the guiding principle of our policy: "We are equal citizens of one State".

5. Human rights serve as the foundation for a harmonious and progressive society. Pakistan attaches high priority to advancing the mutually reinforcing objectives of development, human rights and democracy. Accordingly, there is a strong and unequivocal political commitment in this regard. We have made considerable progress in the field of human rights despite challenges ranging from terrorism to resource constraints. Pakistan remains committed to the promotion and protection of human rights through efforts at the domestic level and through international cooperation and engagement. In pursuance of its deep respect for human rights principles and norms and on the basis of the experience and expertise acquired from its membership in the Council, Pakistan looks forward to contributing further by engaging proactively with the Human Rights Council, its machinery, processes and initiatives, as well as with the members of the international community, United Nations agencies and members of civil society.

National action plan for human rights

6. In fulfilment of its voluntary pledges, universal periodic review recommendations, and unflinching resolve and commitment to further promote human rights in the country, the Government of Pakistan adopted a National Action Plan for Human Rights on 13 February 2016. The Action Plan consists of six broad

areas of intervention: (a) policy and legal reforms; (b) implementation of key human rights priorities; (c) cross-cutting interventions for the protection of human rights; (d) international/United Nations treaty implementation; (e) institutional interventions; and (f) an implementation and monitoring mechanism for the Action Plan. It includes a time frame for implementation of the priority areas with 16 expected outcomes and 60 actions for the protection and promotion of human rights in Pakistan.

7. The Action Plan envisages activities at both the federal and provincial levels in collaboration with federal ministries and provincial departments. An amount of 750 million Pakistan rupees has been allocated to support implementation of the action plan, which includes 400 million Pakistan rupees for human rights education, sensitization, awareness-raising, research and communication; 250 million Pakistan rupees for the establishment of a human rights institute; and an endowment fund of 100 million Pakistan rupees for providing free legal assistance to victims of human rights violations who are poor. A national task force under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Human Rights, with the representation of federal ministries and provincial law/human rights departments, is overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan. Committees have also been formulated at the district level to monitor and promote human rights at the grass-roots level. In addition, Pakistan's Parliament has had the unique distinction of setting up the world's first Sustainable Development Goals implementation unit (with its secretariat based in the Parliament), which has a particular focus on the implementation of goals and targets relating to human rights.

Ratification and implementation of international conventions

8. Pakistan has ratified and continues to implement seven core international human rights treaties and two optional protocols. Pakistan ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict in November 2016. We are focused on the implementation of these instruments at all levels. To achieve this objective, the Government has established treaty implementation cells at the federal and provincial levels to oversee compliance with these international instruments. A module for the capacity-building of officials of the federal and provincial governments about ratified human rights conventions has been prepared and is being implemented.

9. Pakistan continues to regularly report to the relevant treaty bodies on the implementation of these conventions. Pakistan's fifth periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic report on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination were reviewed in May and August 2016, respectively. The initial report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture was reviewed in April 2017. Initial reports on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights will also be reviewed in 2017, along with the review of the third national report under the universal periodic review.

National human rights institutions

10. In accordance with the Paris Principles, Pakistan has established a National Commission for Human Rights. Functional since May 2015, the Commission has a wide-ranging mandate encompassing all aspects of human rights, including dealing with the rights of women, children and other vulnerable segments of the society and jurisdiction to take up any complaint regarding human rights violations. The

establishment of the Commission is a significant step that will further contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in Pakistan.

11. The National Commission on the Status of Women has been strengthened. Under a new team, the Commission is being reinvigorated with a number of initiatives for the empowerment of women and the protection of their rights.

12. Another landmark achievement in the field of human rights is the strengthening of the National Commission on Minorities and the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances. Currently, the Parliament is considering a bill to establish an independent national commission for the rights of children.

13. In line with our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities is being strengthened, and policy measures and laws are being introduced to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, a national committee representing relevant government departments, United Nations agencies and disabled persons organizations has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Minister for Human Rights for implementation of the Convention and other international commitments pertaining to disability.

Legislative and policy measures

14. Significant legislative reforms have been undertaken in recent years. Laws introducing new legislation or addressing gaps in existing legislation have been passed by the Parliament. Most prominent in this regard is pro-women legislation, including anti-rape and anti-honour killing laws and laws relating to forced marriages, workplace harassment and the prevention of criminal incidents involving acid.

15. A number of affirmative measures have been in place, including the reservation of seats for women in the National Assembly and the Senate as well as in the provincial assemblies; the establishment of the Women Parliamentary Caucus; the reservation of seats for women at the three tiers of local bodies, in line with the Beijing Platform for Action; and the reservation of 10 per cent of seats for women in the civil services. All of these policy measures contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 5, which is related to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

16. In addition to a number of laws relating to the rights of children, which are being considered by the Parliament, laws have been passed to prohibit violence and abuse against children and to increase the age of criminal responsibility, as well as a review of the juvenile justice system. A number of laws and administrative measures to safeguard the rights of minorities are being considered, including the Protection of Minorities Bill; the Christian and Hindu Marriages Bill; the establishment of a special police force to provide security for places of worship of minorities; and measures to prevent the misuse and abuse of blasphemy laws.

17. Given the importance it attaches to the right to development, the Government has taken steps to mainstream human rights in the development sector. The integration of human rights in the Vision 2025 plan is a clear manifestation of this priority. In order to promote international cooperation for the realization of the right to development, numerous projects are being undertaken under the China-Pakistan economic corridor and other bilateral cooperation arrangements.

18. At the international level, we continue to constructively engage with United Nations human rights mechanisms. Pakistan is also working closely with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. The following visited Pakistan: the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, from 19 to 29 May

2012; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, from 10 to 12 September 2012; and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, from 11 to 13 March 2013. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also visited Pakistan, from 4 to 8 June 2012. These visits have been useful for us in terms of feedback and are reflective of our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. These visits were part of our efforts to enhance our cooperation in the field of human rights with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We continue to interact with human rights mechanisms in Geneva.

Voluntary pledges and commitments

At the national level

19. In order to further consolidate the progress made during recent years as well as to overcome challenges, Pakistan will take bold measures, with regard to both policy and legal reforms and where necessary, by undertaking effective enforcement of its existing legislation and policy on human rights. Overall, we will further strengthen the holistic approach to human rights with a primary focus of future interventions for women, children, minorities, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable segments of society. We therefore pledge to undertake the utmost effort in this regard, including by considering the following:

(a) Implement the National Action Plan for human rights, which besides setting our strategic direction and key priorities, is aligning our interventions with our national and international obligations;

(b) Formulate a mechanism to identify gaps in existing legislation, propose new legislation and review the enforcement of existing legislation, in consultation with provincial governments and other relevant stakeholders including civil society;

(c) Further enhance the operational effectiveness of national human rights institutions in accordance with their mandates through the provision of adequate human and financial resources;

(d) Enhance the capacity-building of government officials and other relevant stakeholders, including the treaty implementation cells, regarding core human rights conventions ratified by the Government;

(e) Continue to ensure speedy justice for victims of human rights violations, including through the strengthening of human and technical resources available to law enforcement agencies and prosecutors;

(f) Create awareness through media campaigns, seminars and workshops, and through the introduction of human rights education in academic and training institutions;

(g) Establish more crisis centres for women, strengthen and standardize existing centres/services in collaboration with civil society organizations in order to provide rehabilitation services for victims and survivors of violence, and strengthen women police stations;

(h) Safeguard the rights of children by establishing a national commission for the rights of children, and strengthen the National Council for the Persons with Disabilities;

(i) Protect the rights of minorities and promote interfaith harmony through various policy and legislative measures;

(j) Expand the scope of toll-free help lines in all provinces to receive complaints and provide information as well as link complaints to relevant institutions, including offices of the ombudsperson;

(k) Effectively utilize the fund for free legal aid to the victims of human rights violations;

(l) Mainstream human rights in development planning by incorporating cross-cutting issues of health, education and social services under Vision 2025 at the federal and provincial levels. Make efforts to allocate adequate resources for the promotion and protection of human rights and gender mainstreaming in the public sector development programme.

At the international level

20. Pakistan greatly values international cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights treaties and declarations. In this spirit, Pakistan will continue and further strengthen its contribution towards the global promotion of human rights and its positive engagement with the Human Rights Council on the following:

(a) As one of its founding members, Pakistan will continue to strive to make the Human Rights Council a forum for genuine dialogue and cooperation on the basis of the principles of non-discrimination and impartiality, as reflected in Council resolution 5/1 on institution-building of the Council;

(b) Pakistan actively participated in the establishment of various mechanisms of the Council and its review in 2011. We would continue to contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the methods of work of the Council and its various mechanisms;

(c) We would continue to play an active role in the Council with a view to strengthening the Council to promote dialogue, cooperation, capacity-building and technical assistance for the protection and promotion of human rights with due regard to the historic, cultural and religious values of member States and their specific socioeconomic conditions;

(d) We would continue to promote constructive engagement, dialogue and cooperation with the concerned States in addressing "situations of concern" in the Human Rights Council;

(e) We consider the universal periodic review to be a unique cooperative mechanism for identifying human rights challenges and making tangible recommendations in a non-politicized manner. Pakistan constructively participated in its second universal periodic review, held in October 2012. We would continue to make efforts to further strengthen our own participation during the review of our third report on the universal periodic review in November 2017, as well as engage with the universal periodic review mechanism during its third cycle by making action-oriented and useful recommendations to other member States;

(f) Pakistan has had the honour to serve as the Coordinator of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Group on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva for the past many years. Pakistan has endeavoured to build bridges and help to overcome the divergences and misunderstandings that have at times appeared in the approach of the Islamic world and the west regarding some issues. To this end, Pakistan has been a part of all major initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue and harmony among all societies and cultures and has sponsored resolutions in the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council to

promote interreligious and intercultural cooperation for peace. This includes Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief; and the General Assembly resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, which was jointly sponsored by the Philippines and Pakistan. We pledge that we will continue to work with all Member States to maintain and strengthen consensus on these issues;

(g) Pakistan has been supportive of the role and activities of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for promoting a culture of dialogue, tolerance and cooperation among the nations of the world. We will continue to support this initiative;

(h) Both as OIC Coordinator and in its national capacity, Pakistan has maintained strong liaison and coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in its endeavour to promote and advance the human rights agenda. We pledge to provide further support to the Office in carrying out its mandate;

(i) Pakistan would continue to submit all periodic reports to treaty bodies in compliance with its treaty obligations and constructively participate during the reviews;

(j) We would continue to strengthen cooperation and engagement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures. We have also decided to extend invitations to the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and to the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to visit Pakistan on mutually convenient dates.

21. As a democratic and progressive State, Pakistan is firmly resolved to uphold, promote and safeguard universal human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. This is manifest in the high-level political commitment and the policies and programmes of the Government on human rights, and Pakistan's longstanding and continued desire and readiness to work with the international community to strengthen multilateral cooperation and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights. Pakistan considers the opportunity to serve in the Human Rights Council as a means to advance these objectives and would deeply appreciate the confidence and backing of the Member States.

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Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

Letter dated 19 May 2017 from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole addressed to the President of the General Assembly

We have the honour to transmit to you the attached report** on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which met at United Nations Headquarters on 17 and 18 April 2017 pursuant to paragraph 317 of General Assembly resolution 71/257. Section III of the report sets out the agreed recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. Section IV of the report contains guidance for the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process.

We kindly request that the present letter and the report be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea".

(*Signed*) Juliette **Babb-Riley**

(*Signed*) Carolyn **Schwalger**

* A/72/50.

** The report is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

I. Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole

1. The eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects was convened pursuant to paragraph 317 of General Assembly resolution 71/257. The meeting of the Working Group was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 17 and 18 April 2017.

2. The Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Juliette Babb-Riley (Barbados) and Carolyn Schwalger (New Zealand), opened the meeting. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General.

3. Representatives of 44 Member States,[1] seven intergovernmental organizations and other bodies[2] and one non-governmental organization[3] attended the meeting.

4. The following members of the Group of Experts, established pursuant to paragraph 287 of resolution 70/235, also attended the meeting: Anastasia Strati (Greece), Renison Ruwa (Kenya) and Alan Simcock (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). Renison Ruwa and Alan Simcock, in their capacity as Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts, participated only on 18 April.

5. The following supporting documentation was available to the meeting: a provisional agenda; an annotated provisional agenda; a format; a proposed organization of work; three technical abstracts of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (first World Ocean Assessment) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, on the ocean and the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and on the impacts of climate change and related changes in the atmosphere on the ocean; elements for guidelines for workshops to assist the first round of workshops of the second cycle of the Regular Process; and revised terms of reference and working methods of the Group of Experts prepared pursuant to the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 310 of its resolution 71/257.

6. The Working Group adopted the agenda (see sect. II below) and agreed on the organization of work as proposed by the Co-Chairs.

7. Under agenda item 4, the Co-Chairs presented the report of the Bureau of the Working Group. A number of delegations made statements under the agenda item, welcoming the report and the intersessional work of the Bureau, including its development of a mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts pursuant

[1] Argentina, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lebanon, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine and United States of America.

[2] European Union, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, International Atomic Energy Agency, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

[3] International Transport Workers' Federation.

to paragraph 311 of General Assembly resolution 71/257 and its development of draft terms of reference for national focal points to be designated by States by 31 May 2017 in accordance with paragraph 312 of the same resolution. The Working Group took note of the report.

8. A number of delegations made general statements under agenda item 5 expressing their appreciation for the work of the Co-Chairs, the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat during the intersessional period. Delegations highlighted the successful preparation of the technical abstracts, noting that they signified progress in the implementation of the programme of work for the period 2017-2020, that they provided a useful synthesis of the first World Ocean Assessment for policymakers and that they were intended to be policy-relevant and not prescriptive.

9. During its deliberations on agenda item 6, the Working Group considered the elements for guidelines for workshops to assist the first round of workshops of the second cycle of the Regular Process, presented by the Director of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea on behalf of the Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts. The usefulness of the elements as a basis for the finalization and preparation by the Bureau of guidelines for the first round of workshops in 2017 to assist the Regular Process was noted. Several delegations expressed the view that hosting of the workshops should be limited to States and relevant United Nations system organizations, funds and programmes.

10. Under agenda item 7, and pursuant to paragraph 317 of General Assembly resolution 71/257, the Working Group considered the technical abstracts prepared in accordance with the programme of work for the period 2017-2020. Delegations took note with appreciation of the abstracts and noted their usefulness in support of other ocean-related processes, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. Delegations noted that the abstracts would be launched at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to be held from 5 to 9 June 2017.

11. Under agenda item 8, the Working Group considered the revised terms of reference and working methods for the Group of Experts, which were prepared by the Group of Experts in accordance with paragraph 310 of General Assembly resolution 71/257. Following the presentation of the revised terms of reference, the Working Group adopted the terms of reference and working methods for the Group of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process.

12. Under agenda item 9, the Director of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea reported on the status of the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of supporting the operations of the Regular Process and noted that the trust fund had not received any contributions since the last meeting of the Working Group. Delegations were encouraged to continue to contribute to the trust fund pursuant to the appeal from the General Assembly in paragraph 315 of its resolution 71/257. It was noted that, pursuant to paragraph 316 of its resolution 71/257, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to secure the necessary resources, including the option of the regular budget of the Organization, for the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process in accordance with

established procedures and within the respective purview of relevant bodies. In that regard, resources had been allocated by the Assembly for 2017.

Adoption of recommendations to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session

13. Under agenda item 9, the Working Group also considered the draft recommendations and guidance to the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat.

14. The Working Group then adopted by consensus the draft recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session (sect. III). The Working Group also adopted the guidance to the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat (sect. IV).

II. Agenda of the eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole

15. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole adopted the agenda set out below.

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. General statements.
5. Report of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.
6. Regional workshops, including elements for guidelines for workshops to assist the Regular Process.
7. Consideration of the technical abstracts in accordance with the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process.
8. Revised terms of reference and working methods of the Group of Experts.
9. Other matters.
10. Closure of the meeting.

III. Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session

16. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends to the General Assembly that it:

(a) Reaffirm the importance of the first World Ocean Assessment as the outcome of the first cycle of the Regular Process;

(b) Recall the importance of making Governments, United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental organizations, the scientific community and the general public aware of the first World Ocean Assessment and the Regular Process, and recognize with appreciation the activities undertaken in this regard, in particular those of the secretariat of the Regular Process;

(c) Take note with appreciation of the technical abstracts of the first World Ocean Assessment on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, on the ocean and the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and on the impacts of climate change and related changes in the atmosphere on the ocean, prepared in accordance with the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(d) Recognize with appreciation the work of the members of the Group of Experts with respect to the preparation of the technical abstracts, as well as the contribution of a number of members from the writing teams of the Pool of Experts of the first cycle of the Regular Process, in accordance with paragraph 309 of resolution 71/257, to this exercise;

(e) Welcome the holding of the eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on 17 and 18 April 2017, in accordance with paragraph 317 of resolution 71/257;

(f) Take note of the recommendations and guidance adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its eighth meeting;

(g) Take note of the endorsement by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the terms of reference and working methods of the Group of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process, prepared in accordance with paragraph 310 of resolution 71/257, and annexed to the present report;

(h) Take note of the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process[4] developed by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in accordance with paragraph 311 of resolution 71/257, and encourage the appointment of experts to the Pool of Experts in accordance with the mechanism;

(i) Take note of the terms of reference for national focal points[5] developed by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole;

(j) Welcome the designation by States of national focal points pursuant to paragraph 312 of resolution 71/257;

(k) Take note of the adoption by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of guidelines for workshops to assist the first round of workshops of the second cycle of the Regular Process, finalized by the Group of Experts in consultation with the Bureau of the Working Group and the secretariat of the Regular Process.

IV. Guidance for the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process

17. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole decides to:

(a) Take note with appreciation of the technical abstracts of the first World Ocean Assessment on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, on the ocean and the Sustainable

[4] See "Mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process", available at http://www.un.org/depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm.

[5] See "Terms of reference for National Focal Points", available at http://www.un.org/depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm.

Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and on the impacts of climate change and related changes in the atmosphere on the ocean, prepared in accordance with the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(b) Note with appreciation that an advance and unedited version of the technical abstract on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction would be made available at the third session of the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, to be held from 27 March to 7 April 2017; that an advance and unedited version of the technical abstract on the impacts of climate change and related changes in the atmosphere on the ocean would be made available at the eighteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, to be held from 15 to 19 May 2017; that the technical abstract on the ocean and the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would be made available at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to be held from 5 to 9 June 2017; and that all three technical abstracts will be launched at the latter Conference;

(c) Request its Bureau to finalize and adopt the guidelines for the first round of workshops in 2017 to assist the Regular Process, taking into account the elements for those guidelines prepared by the Group of Experts in consultation with the secretariat;

(d) Endorse the terms of reference and working methods of the Group of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process, prepared in accordance with paragraph 310 of resolution 71/257 and attached as an annex to the present report;

(e) Take note of the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts[4] for the second cycle of the Regular Process, developed by its Bureau in accordance with paragraph 311 of resolution 71/257, and encourage the appointment of experts to the Pool of Experts in accordance with the mechanism;

(f) Take note of the terms of reference for national focal points[5] to be designated pursuant to paragraph 312 of resolution 71/257, developed by its Bureau, and request the secretariat to invite States to designate such national focal points by 31 May 2017;

(g) Request intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide information on recent and ongoing assessments and other processes at the regional and global levels relevant to the Regular Process in order for the secretariat to update the inventory of recent and ongoing assessments and other processes at the regional and global levels relevant to the Regular Process;

(h) Invite States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide relevant information for inclusion in the capacity-building inventory of needs and opportunities relevant for the Regular Process to be compiled and maintained by the secretariat.

Annex

Terms of reference and working methods for the Group of Experts of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 287 of its resolution 70/235 on oceans and the law of the sea, requested the Secretary-General to invite the Chairs of the regional groups to constitute a Group of Experts ensuring adequate expertise and geographical distribution, comprising a maximum of 25 experts, with no more than five experts per regional group, for the duration of the second cycle of the Regular Process, taking into account the desirability of some degree of continuity, and in accordance with the terms of reference of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process.

2. The General Assembly, in paragraph 306 of its resolution 71/257 on oceans and the law of the sea, welcomed the constitution of the Group of Experts as an integral part of the second cycle of the Regular Process and requested the members of the Group of Experts who have been appointed by Member States pursuant to paragraph 287 of resolution 70/235 to serve on the Group of Experts for the duration of the second cycle in an independent and personal capacity.

3. The General Assembly also, in paragraph 310 of resolution 71/257, requested the Group of Experts to review, for their applicability to the second cycle of the Regular Process, the terms of reference and working methods of the Group of Experts of the first cycle of the Regular Process, and to modify them, as appropriate, so as to ensure, among other things, continuous full membership and engagement by the members of the Group of Experts, and inform the Bureau for subsequent endorsement by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

4. The present document contains terms of reference and working methods revised, in the light of that request, by the Group of Experts with the help of the secretariat of the Regular Process, considered by the Bureau and adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

II. Terms of reference

5. The general task of the Group of Experts shall be to carry out any assessments within the framework of the Regular Process at the request of the General Assembly[*] under the supervision of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and its Bureau. In particular, the tasks of the Group of Experts shall be:

(a) To draft an outline of questions to be considered in the main assessment or assessments to be undertaken in each cycle of the Regular Process, for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole;

(b) To prepare such further outputs relating to assessments under the Regular Process as the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole may include in the programme of work of the Regular Process, for consideration by the Working Group;

[*] It is understood that to carry out any assessment the approval of the General Assembly is required.

(c) To provide specifications of the types of additional expertise that the Group of Experts will need to carry out any assessment, as a basis for appointments, through the regional groups, of members of the Pool of Experts;

(d) To designate from among its members a lead member and, as appropriate, other members to take responsibility, under the overall responsibility of the Group of Experts, for each part, section or chapter of any assessment or other output, subject to the approval of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole or its Bureau;

(e) To propose assignments for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole or its Bureau of members of the Pool of Experts:

(i) To work with the designated lead member of the Group of Experts in drafting working papers and/or draft chapters of any assessment and/or other output;

(ii) To review and comment on material produced for any assignment;

(f) To draft an implementation plan and timetable for every assessment or other output, for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole or its Bureau, and, if necessary, to propose amendments to that plan and timetable for approval in the same way;

(g) To propose general guidance to all those involved in producing any assessment or other output, based on the principles and documents approved by the General Assembly, for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole or its Bureau;

(h) To carry out implementation plans in accordance with their timetables and any such general guidance;

(i) To review all material produced for any assessment or other output, to take such steps as it considers necessary to assure the quality of data and information used in such material, and to take any further steps necessary to bring the assessment or other output to a satisfactory conclusion, subject to the approval of the Bureau if any such action would require expenditure from the trust fund for the Regular Process;

(j) To propose arrangements for approval by the Bureau for the peer review of the draft of any assessment or other output;

(k) In the light of the comments from the peer review, to agree on a final text of any assessment or other output for submission through its Bureau to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, and to present that text to the Working Group;

(l) To promote engagement among bodies which can contribute to marine assessments, including United Nations agencies, bodies, funds and programmes, other intergovernmental organizations, relevant non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, private-sector bodies and philanthropic organizations, as appropriate;

(m) To perform any other tasks assigned to it by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

Composition

6. The Group of Experts shall be composed as follows:

(a) The Group of Experts shall be composed of a maximum of 25 experts and no more than five experts from each regional group. Its composition shall reflect geographic and gender balance;

(b) The composition shall ensure a mix of disciplinary expertise and involve participants from all regions in order to take into account different regional circumstances and experience. All of the main disciplines in the social, economic and environmental sciences should be considered for inclusion;

(c) The experts may be drawn from any type of affiliation (e.g. Government, non-governmental organization, intergovernmental organization, private sector, academic and research institutions, holders of traditional knowledge);[b]

(d) The experts shall have experience and expertise in one or several of the categories described in the collective profile of the Group of Experts;

(e) The experts shall have internationally recognized excellence in their field or fields of expertise;

(f) The experts shall have demonstrated high-level participation in international processes relevant to the marine environment;

(g) The experts shall have the ability to serve in an independent, personal capacity.

Appointments

7. Members of the Group of Experts shall be appointed in accordance with paragraph 287 of General Assembly resolution 70/235, as follows:

(a) Members shall be nominated by the States Members of the United Nations through the five regional groups (African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States and Western European and other States), with each regional group nominating up to five experts;

(b) Nominations shall take account of the criteria for the appointment of experts;

(c) Members shall be in a position to devote substantial amounts of time to the work of the Regular Process;

(d) Members shall participate in the Group of Experts in their personal capacity and not as a representative of a Government or of any authority external to the United Nations;

(e) The Chair of a regional group shall inform the secretariat of the Regular Process that the regional group has made an appointment to the Group of Experts. The secretariat of the Regular Process shall issue a letter of confirmation of the appointment to the expert and (when they have been designated) inform the Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts accordingly;

(f) If a member of the Group of Experts for any cause can no longer perform his or her duties (including where this is due to pressure of other commitments) or wishes to resign, he or she shall immediately inform the Joint Coordinators and, through them, the secretariat of this situation. In such a case, and when a member dies, another member appointed from the same regional group shall serve for the remainder of the predecessor's term;

(g) An appointment to fill a vacancy occurring during a cycle may be made at any time, but the appointment shall come to an end at the end of the cycle during which it is made;

(h) Membership shall be renewed at the start of each cycle of the Regular Process. Existing members of the Group of Experts may be reappointed.

[b] See General Assembly resolutions 66/231, 65/37 A and 64/71.

Proprietary rights

8. The United Nations shall be entitled to all proprietary rights, including but not limited to patents, copyrights and trademarks, with regard to material which bears a direct relation to, or is made in consequence of, the services provided to the Organization.

Compensation

9. Members of the Group of Experts shall not receive any honorarium, fee or other remuneration from the United Nations for their participation in the Group of Experts. Members from developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing States, will, subject to the availability of resources, receive travel assistance to participate in the meetings to be convened by the United Nations in conjunction with the work of the Group of Experts.

Working methods

10. The working methods of the Group of Experts shall be as follows:

(a) The Group of Experts may operate even if there are vacancies in its composition;

(b) The Group of Experts shall designate two coordinators from among its members, one from a developed country and one from a developing country. The task of the coordinators shall be to take such actions as they jointly consider will facilitate the discharge by the Group of Experts of the tasks which it has been given. The Group of Experts may change the designation of the coordinators at any time;

(c) Communications between the Group of Experts, the secretariat of the Regular Process and States shall be made through a secure website or (if need be) other means, as appropriate;

(d) The Group of Experts shall communicate with the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and its Bureau through the secretariat of the Regular Process and through meetings convened by the secretariat of the Regular Process, within available resources;

(e) When needed, and within available resources, the Group of Experts may meet to discuss areas of work which cannot be dealt with through electronic meetings or other forms of electronic communication;

(f) The Group of Experts shall aim to work by consensus. Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Group of Experts shall ensure that all divergent opinions are appropriately reported in any draft, any proposal or any final text of any assessment or other output.

Secretariat

11. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as part of its functions as the secretariat of the Regular Process, shall serve as the secretariat of the Group of Experts, and provide advice to the Group of Experts when appropriate.